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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

7 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CLXX.

COMPRISING PERIOD FROM WEDNESDAY, TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1907, TO TUESDAY, TWELFTH DAY OF MARCH, 1907

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION

1907.

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CHRONOLOGY OF "THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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E. Crewe. (*L. President.*)
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D. Northumberland
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
E. Derby.
E. Denbigh.
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E. Carrington.
V. Sidmouth.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Barnard.
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Poltimore.
L. Kintore. (*E. Kintore.*)
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Kinnaird.
L. Hylton.
L. Fermanagh. (*E. Erne.*)
L. Herries.
L. Monkswell.
L. Newton.
L. Welby.
L. Ludlow.

All petitions relating to the Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present session referred to the Committee unless otherwise ordered. 4

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.—Select Committee appointed: The Lords following with the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, and the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:—

D. Northumberland.
M. Bath.
M. Cholmondeley.
M. Breadalbane.

E. Liverpool. (*L. Steward.*)
E. Clarendon.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Spencer.
E. Mount Edgcumbe.
E. Belmore.
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
E. Ancaster.
E. Carrington.
E. Halsbury.
E. Plymouth.
V. Gordon. (*E. Aberdeen*)
V. Cross.
V. Peel.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
V. Selby.
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Rosebery. (*E. Rosebery.*)
L. Kintore. (*E. Kintore.*)
L. Belper.
L. Tweedmouth.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Welby.
L. Burghclere.
L. Colebroke.

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC IN WEST AFRICA.

The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 5
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Elgin*) 12
Lord Stanmore 16

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

North Eastern and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways Bill (BY ORDER); Shanklin Gas Bill (by Order).—Read a second time and committed 71

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Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—" To confirm a Provisional Order made by one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State under the Metropolitan Police Act, 1886," presented by Mr. Herbert Samuel; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 74] 17

PETITIONS.

MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURE.—Petition from London, for limitation; to lie upon the Table 17

TEACHERS' PENSIONS.—Petition from East London and South Essex, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table 17

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—Petitions in favour—from Birmingham; Maidstone; and Marylebone; to lie upon the Table 17

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARTERIAL DRAINAGE COMMISSION (IRELAND).—Copy presented, of Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Arterial Drainage in Ireland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 17

COLONIAL REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS).—Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 40 (Northern Nigeria), Memorandum on the Taxation of Natives in Northern Nigeria, by Sir F. D. Lugard, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., late High Commissioner [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.. 17

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.—Copy presented, of Agricultural Statistics, 1906, Vol. XLI., Part II., Return of Produce of Crops in Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 18

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (PHOSPHOROUS POISONING AT MESSRS. MORELAND'S MATCH FACTORY, GLOUCESTER).—Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by H. H. S. Cunyngham, Esq., C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State, and B. A. Whitelegge, Esq., C.B., M.D., His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Factories, on the circumstances attending a fatal case of Phosphorus Poisoning at the Match Factory of Messrs. Moreland and Company, Gloucester [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 18

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).—Copy presented, of Licence granted to Jenny Lang, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the Home of St. John the Baptist, London, S.W. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 18

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).—Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 21) Warrant, 1907, dated 14th February, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table. 18

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.—Bridlington Piers and Harbour. Copy of abstract of the General Annual Account for the year ending 26th July, 1906 [by Act].

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Railway, etc., Bills.—Copy ordered, "of Report by the Board of Trade upon all the Bills and Provisional Orders of Session 1907 relating to Railways, Canals, Tramways, Harbours and Tidal Waters, and the supply of Electricity Gas, and Water."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*) 18

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

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DUAL SYSTEM IN BELFAST POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 19

MONEY REQUIRED TO MEET SALES OF IRISH ESTATES.—Question, Captain Craig (Down, E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 19

INNY JUNCTION PEAT WORKS.—Question, Mr. Ginnell (Westmeath, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 20

CRICHTON ESTATE, ROSCOMMON.—Question, Mr. Haydon (Roscommon, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 21

IRISH LAND ACT—SECTION 54.—Question, Mr. Fetherstonhaugh (Fermanagh, N.): Answer, Mr. Birrell 21

ANUHI MINING CONTRACT.—Question, Sir E. Sassoon (Hythe); Answer, Sir E. Grey 22

NAVY—COMMANDERS ON THE ACTIVE LIST.—Question, Mr. Bellairs: Answer, Mr. E. Robertson 23

NAVY—SHIPS IN FULL COMMISSION.—Question, Mr. Bellairs; Answer, Mr. E. Robertson 25

REPAIRS TO H.M.S. "COMMONWEALTH."—Question, Mr. E. Lamb (Rochester); Answer, Mr. E. Robertson 26

RAILWAY COMBINE TO MAINTAIN FREIGHT RATES.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, Mr. Lloyd-George 26

EXPENDITURE OF UNEMPLOYED FUND ON EMIGRATION.—Question, Mr. Bridgeman (Shropshire, Oswestry); Answer, Mr. J. Burns 27

INFANT MORTALITY AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.—Question, Mr. Morrell (Oxfordshire, Henley); Answer, Mr. J. Burns 28

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LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION—THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE MEETING.—Question, Mr. Hyde (Wednesbury); Answer, Mr. Gladstone 29

SEPARATE COURTS FOR CHILDREN'S CASES.—Question, Mr. Toulmin (Bury, Lancashire): Answer, Mr. Gladstone 29

INDIAN MILITARY SERVICE FAMILY PENSIONS.—Question, Sir Seymour King (Hull, Central); Answer, Mr. Morley 29

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COST OF COLONIAL GARRISONS.—Questions, Mr. H. Cox and Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool); Answers, Mr. Haldane 32

IMPRISONMENT IN INDIA.—Question, Sir H. Cotton (Nottingham, E.); Answer The Under-Secretary of State for India (Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.) 32

ORANGE RIVER COLONY CONSTITUTION.—Question, Mr. Pike Pease (Darlington); Answer, The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.) 33

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CANADA AND GERMANY.—Question, Sir G. Parker (Gravesend); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury) 35

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NAVAL UNIFORMS IN POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS.—Question, Mr. Bowerman (Deptford); Answer, Mr. Gladstone 38

DALE HILL MOTOR FATALITY.—Question, Mr. Radford (Islington, E.); Answer, Mr. Gladstone 38

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Law of Copyright.—Question, Mr. Beckett (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby); Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Lloyd-George ,Carnarvon Boroughs) 40

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Report on Local Authorities Accounts.—Question, Mr. Radford; Answer, Mr. J. Burns 43

Post Office Accounts.—Question, Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor); Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. S. Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) 43

Welsh Education Department.—Question, Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) and Mr. D. A. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, The President of the Board of Education (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) 44

Swansea Education Dispute.—Questions, Lord R. Cecil; Answers, Mr. McKenna 44

Education Bill.—Question, Mr. Meysey-Thomson (Staffordshire, Handsworth); Answer, Mr. McKenna 45

Parliamentary Hairdressers' Wages.—Question, Mr. Wilkie (Dundee) and Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 46

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CAPE GOVERMENT AND COLONIAL PREFERENCE.—Questions, Sir Edward Sassoon (Hythe) and Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan); Answers, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 66

SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.—Question, Mr. Corrie Grant (Warwickshire, Rugby); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 67

THE WRECK OF THE "BERLIN."—Question, Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 67

SELECTION.—Ordered, That Mr. Eugene Wason be discharged from the Committee and that Mr. Crombie be added.—(*Sir William Brampton Gurdon*) 67

NEW BILLS.

Probation of Offenders Bill.—"To permit the release of Offenders on Probation in certain cases," presented by Mr. Secretary Gladstone; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 75] .. 68

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Licensing (Scotland) Amendment Bill.—" To provide for the later opening in the morning of premises licensed for the Sale of Excisable Liquors in Scotland," presented by Mr. Findlay; supported by Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Robert Balfour, Mr. Cross, Mr. Gulland, Mr. McCallum, Mr. Sutherland, and Mr. Wilkie; to be read a second time upon Friday, 26th April, and to be printed. [Bill 76] 68

Clerks of the Peace and County Council Bill.—" To amend the Law with regard to Clerks of the Peace and Clerks of the County Council," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Sir John Kennaway, Sir Francis Channing, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, and Sir Walter Foster; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 77] 68

Justices of the Peace Bill.—" To amend the Law in regard to the appointment of Justices of the Peace," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Sir Francis Channing, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Corrie Grant, Sir William Brampton Gurdon, and Mr. A. Edward Dunn; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 78] 68

Spurious Sports Bill.—" To prohibit the hunting, coursing, and shooting of animals kept in confinement," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Mr. Corrie Grant, Mr. George Greenwood, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr. Cameron Corbett; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 79] 68

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 190,000, all ranks, be maintained for the service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding His Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31s day of March, 1908."

Mr. Wyndham (Dover) 69
Major Seely (Liverpool, Abercromby) 81
Mr. Arthur Lee (Hampshire, Fareham) 89
Sir H. Cotton (Nottingham, E.) 95
Col. Kenyon-Slaney (Shropshire, Newport) 99
Col. Herbert (Monmouthshire, S.) 104
Major Anstruther-Gray (St. Andrews Burghs) 107
Mr. Courtney Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) 109
Col. R. Williams (Dorsetshire, W.) 111
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 113
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 114
Captain Kincaid Smith (Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon) 123

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Motion made, and Question, " That the Chairman do report Progress ; and ask leave to sit again "—(*Captain Kincaid-Smith*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again to-morrow.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND (DISESTABLISHMENT).

Mr. Everett (*Suffolk, Woodbridge*) 124
Mr. Goddard (*Ipswich*) 131

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That, in the interests alike of religion and the nation, it is desirable to disestablish and disendow the Church of England both in England and Wales."—(*Mr. Everett.*) .. ..

Sir John Kennaway (*Devonshire, Honiton*) 136
Mr. Harwood (*Bolton*) 141

Amendment proposed—

" In line 1, to leave out from the word ' the,' to the end of the Question, and add the works, ' opinion of this House, the passing of any measure to destroy the national position which the Church of England has held for so many centuries, and to secularise her ancient endowments, would grievously impede her great and growing work for the spiritual and social welfare of the people and would be a serious blow to the cause of religion and morality in the nation.' "—(*Sir John Kennaway.*)

Question proposed, " That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Austin Taylor (*Liverpool, East Toxteth*) 143
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.*) 148
Mr. Lyttelton (*St. George's, Hanover Square*) 156
Sir Alfred Thomas (*Glamorganshire, E.*) 162

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 206 ; Noes, 93. (Division List No. 29.)

Main Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 198 ; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 30.)

Resolved, That, in the interests alike of Religion and the Nation, it is desirable to Disestablish and Disendow the Church of England both in England and Wales.

Adjourned at a quarter after Eleven o'clock.

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HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with. National Trust for Places of Historical Interest or Natural Beauty [H.L.]

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with. Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 169

York and District Tramways Bill [H.L]; Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway Bill; Rawtenstall Corporation Bill.—Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Thursday next 169

Midland Railway Bill [H.L.]; Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a}, and committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 169

Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Ship Canal (Bridgewater Canal) Bill [H.L.]; Medway Lower Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Devonport Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]; Middlesbrough Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Oxford and District Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.) L. Kilmarnock (*E. Erroll*), L. Abinger, L. Hylton (Chairman), L. Ramsay (*E. Dalhousie*), L. Sandhurst; agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 169

Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]; Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Burnham (Somerset) Pier Bill [H.L.]; Heywood and Middleton Water Board Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Tyne Improvement Bill [H.L.]; Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.) E. Cathcart, V. Hill, V. Iveagh, L. Belhaven and Stenton, L. Sanderson (chairman); agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 170

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Irish Land Commission (Proceedings).—Return for January, 1907. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 170

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LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES.—Statements of Accounts, and of life assurance and annuity business, and abstracts of actuarial reports deposited with the Board of Trade under Section 10 of "The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1870," during the year ended 31st December, 1906 170

Order under Section 59 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board of the following county council:

ISLE OF WIGHT.—For amending certain confirming orders relating to the parishes of North Arreton and South Arreton 170

MOTOR-CAR ACTS, 1896 AND 1903.—Regulations made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 12 of the Act of 1903 for altering the Heavy Motor-Car Order, 1904, as to the use of heavy motor-cars on bridges.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situate within the borough of East Retford, made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 8 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situated within the borough of Guildford, made by the Local Government Board under Section 9 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situate within the borough of Harrogate, made by the Local Government Board under Section 9 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on a certain highway situate within the parish of Heversham, in the county of Westmoreland, made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 8 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situate within the urban district of Newmarket, made by the Local Government Board under Section 9 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the registration of motor-cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 7 of the Act of 1903: —London (County)— For assigning an index mark to the London County Council in addition to the index marks assigned by the Motor-Car (Registration and Licensing) Order, 1903, and the Order of the Local Government Board dated the 17th day of April, 1905.. 170

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904 (CITY OF CARDIFF).—Order made by the council of the city of Cardiff, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the riverside and canton wards of the city.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 171

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST—RHODESIA AND BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE.)—Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 2) Warrant, 1907, dated 14th February, 1907 172

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PIERS AND HARBOURS (PROVISIONAL ORDERS), SESSION 1907.—Report by the Board of Trade of their proceedings under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, and the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, Amendment Act .. 172

BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND).—Returns of the Official Assignees of the King's Bench Division "in Bankruptcy" in Ireland, and of the Local Courts, Belfast and Cork, for the year 1906 172

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888.

I. Sixteen orders under Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board, of the following county and county borough councils—

Brecon.—For converting part of the parish of Llanwrtyd in the Builth Rural District into the urban district of Llanwrtyd, and for constituting the remainder of the parish a new parish named the parish of Llanwrtyd Without.

Buckingham.—For dividing the parish of Wavendon, in the Newport Pagnell Union, into two parishes named the parish of Wavendon and the parish of Woburn Sands.

Essex.—For defining the boundary between the parish of Bartlow Hamlet (otherwise known as the hamlet of Little Bartlow or of Bartlow End) and the parish of Ashdon.

Flint.—For transferring part of the parish of Hawarden to the parish of Saltney, and of part of the parish of Saltney to the parish of Hawarden.

Gateshead (County Borough).—For uniting the parishes of Gateshead and Heworth Within to form the parish of Gateshead.

Isle of Wight.—For uniting the parishes of North Arreton and Whippingham to form the parish of Whippingham.

Kent.—For transferring the part of the parish of Chatham situate in the borough of Gillingham to the parish of Gillingham.

Lancaster.—For transferring two detached parts of the township of Worsley to the township of Swinton and the urban district of Swinton and Pendlebury.

Lincoln (County Borough).—For uniting the nineteen parishes comprised in the county borough to form the parish of Lincoln.

Northumberland.—For uniting the urban districts of Cowpen and Blyth to form the urban district of Blyth.

Pembroke.—For converting part of the parish of Fishguard into the urban district of Fishguard and for dividing the parish into two parishes named the parish of Fishguard North and the parish of Fishguard South.

Salop.—For defining the boundary between the parishes of Saint Martin's and Weston Rhyn.

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Stafford.—For transferring the parish of Bagnall from the Stoke Rural District to the Leek Rural District.

Suffolk East.—For constituting parts of the parishes of Barking and and Creeting Saint Mary a new parish called the parish of Needham Market, and for transferring a further part of the parish of Creeting Saint Mary to the parish of Barking.

Suffolk East.—For uniting the parishes of Kirkley and Lowestoft to form the parish of Lowestoft.

Wilts.—For uniting the parishes of Chitterne All Saints and Chitterne Saint Mary to form the parish of Chitterne 172

NEW BILL.

County Courts Bill.—A Bill to amend the law relating to County Courts—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 9) 173

AUSTRALIAN STATES CONSTITUTION BILL.—House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Tuesday next 174

THE HOUSE AND GOVERNMENT BILLS.

The Earl of Camperdown 174

Moved, "That there be laid before the House a Return showing the dates when Government Bills were brought to this House from the House of Commons during the present and last three preceding Parliaments, and the dates when the different stages of such Bills were taken in this House; also similar Return with regard to Bills introduced in either House by private Members, and subsequently taken up by Government, showing at what stage and on what dates such Bills were so taken up."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 174
Lord James of Hereford 176
The Marquess of Lansdowne 176
The Earl of Camderdown 178

On Question, Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

LONDON TRAFFIC.

Lord Leigh 178

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Papers relating to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on London Traffic for the appointment of a Traffic Board."—(*Lord Leigh.*)

The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Onslow*) 181
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The Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) 191
The Marquess of Lansdowne 196
Lord Stanley of Alderley 199
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 201
The Earl of Crewe 203

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IN INDIA.

Lord Kinnaird 206
Earl Beauchamp 208

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz. :—Gas Companies (Removal of Sulphur Restrictions) Bill; Mitcham and Wimbledon District Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time. 209

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 209

Barry Railway Bill.—" To enable the Barry Railway Company to construct new railways and waterworks; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 210

Rawtenstall Corporation Bill.—" To authorise the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Rawtenstall to construct and work tramwways and to provide and work omnibuses; to confer further powers upon them in relation to their electricity and market undertakings; to authorise them to construct a street work, and to acquire lands, and to make further provision with regard to the health, local government, and improvement of the borough of Rawtenstall; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time 210

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South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill—"To extend the time for the compulsory purchase of lands and for the completion of works for the South Eastern and London Chatham and Dover Railways; and to authorise the raising of additional capital by the South Eastern Railway Company; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 210

PETITIONS.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table 210

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888.—Copy presented of Orders made by the various County and County Borough Councils in England and Wales under Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 210

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).—Copy presented, of Return of Proceedings during the Month of January, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 211

BANKRUPTCY COURTS (IRELAND).—Annual Returns presented, of the Official Assignees of the Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland and the Local Courts, Belfast and Cork, for the year 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table .. 211

RAILWAY, ETC., BILLS.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 27th February; *Mr. Lloyd-George*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 57.] 211

LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES.—Copy presented, of Statements of Accounts, and of Life Assurance and Annuity Business and Abstracts of Actuarial Reports, deposited with the Board of Trade during the year ended 31st December, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 58.] 211

PIERS AND HARBOURS (PROVISIONAL ORDERS).—Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Trade of their Proceedings under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, and the General Pier and Harbour Act (1861) Amendment Act, Session 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 59.] 211

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.—Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the City of Cardiff, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Riverside and Canton Wards of the City [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 211

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES ESTIMATES, 1907–8).—Estimate presented, of the sum required for the year ending 31st March, 1908, to defray the Expense of the Ordnance Factories (by Command]; referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 60.] 211

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ALIENS (NATURALISATION).—Address for "Return showing the names of all Aliens to whom Certificates of Naturalisation have been issued and whose Oaths of Allegiance have, between the 1st day of January, 1906, and the 31st day of December, 1906, been registered at the Home Office, giving the country and place of residence of the person naturalised, and including information as to any Aliens who have, during the same period, obtained Acts of Naturalisation from the Legislature (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 93, of Session, 1906)."—(*Mr. Herbert Samuel*).

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS (REGULATIONS).—Return ordered, showing (*a*) the names of the Councils of boroughs and urban and rural districts who have made Regulations under the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order of 1885; and (*b*) the number of Councils of each class who have not made any such Regulations."—(*Dr. Rutherford*) 212

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NEW BILLS.

Police (Superannuation) Bill.—" To amend the Law respecting the Superannuation of Police Constables," presented by Mr. Samuel Roberts; to be read a second time upon Friday, 22nd March, and to be printed. [Bill 80.] 269

Advertisements Regulation Bill.—" To authorise local authorities to make by-laws respecting the exhibition of Advertisements," presented by Mr. Hart-Davies; supported by Mr. Wyndham, Sir William Brampton Gurdon, Lord Balcarres, Sir Charles Schwann, Mr. Butcher, Mr. MacNeill, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr. Beale; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 81.] 269

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Weekly Rest-Day Bill.—" To secure a Weekly Rest-day," presented by Mr. Clarke; supported by Mr. George White, Mr. Steadman, Mr. Bertram Straus, Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Corrie Grant, Mr. Remnant, and Mr. Charles Price; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 82.] 269

Education (Administrative Provisions) Bill.—" To make provision for the better administration by the central and local authorities in England and Wales of the enactments relating to Education," presented by Mr. McKenna; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 83.] 269

Small Holdings (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill.—" To establish a Department of the Board of Agriculture in Scotland and to facilitate the provision of Small Holdings in Scotland, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Munro Ferguson; supported by Sir Thomas Glen-Coats and Sir Edward Tennant; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th March, and to be printed. [Bill 84.] 269

SUPPLY [1ST ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 190,000, all ranks, be maintained for the service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding His Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908."

Captain Kincaid-Smith (Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon) 270
The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.) 275
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 290
The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Haldane, Haddington) 302
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Captain Craig (Down, E.) 315
Major McMicking (Kirkcudbrightshire) 320
Captain Faber (Hampshire, Andover) 323
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) 325

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That a sum, not exceeding £9,835,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Pay, etc., of His Majesty's Army (including Army Reserve) at Home and Abroad (exclusive of India) which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908."

Mr. J. Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) 328

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

Metropolitan Water Board (Charges, etc.) Bill [By Order].

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir F. Dixon-Hartland (Middlesex, Uxbridge) 328
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 330

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Dixon-Hartland.*)

Mr. Ernest H. Lamb (Rochester) 342
Mr. Pickersgill (Bethnall Green, S.W.) 343
Mr. Nield (Middlesex, Ealing) 344
Mr. Morton (Sutherland) 345

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 219; Noes, 44. (Division List No. 31.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

Supply (Army Estimates).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £9,835,000 be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the pay, etc., of His Majesty's Army (including Army Reserve) at home and abroad (exclusive of India), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908," resumed.

Question again proposed.

Mr. J. Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) 349
Mr. Hicks-Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 351
Mr. Lane-Fox (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) 356
Mr. Lupton (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) 358

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

Post Office Servants.—Ordered, That a Select Committee of Nine Members be appointed to inquire into the wages and position of the principal classes of Post Office Servants, and also of the unestablished sub-postmasters.

To examine, as far as may be necessary for the purpose of their Report, the conditions of employment of these classes.

To report whether, having regard to the conditions and prospects of their employment, and, as far as may be, to the standard rate of wages and the position of other classes of workers, the remuneration they receive is adequate or otherwise.

Mr. Barker, Mr. Frank Edwards, Mr. Claude Hay, Sir Clement Hill, Mr. Hobhouse, Mr. Meehan, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. John Ward, and Mr. Wardle were nominated Members of the Select Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Four be the quorum.—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton*) 360

Adjourned at one minute after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 1st MARCH, 1906.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

New Writ.—For the Borough of Halifax, in the room of John Henry Whitley, esquire, one of the Commissioners for executing the office of Treasurer of the Exchequer of Great Britain and Lord High Treasurer of Ireland.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 361

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords].—Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the Bills comprised in the List reported by the Chairman of Ways and Means as intended to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with in the following case, viz., Middlesborough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways 361

PETITIONS.

Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table 361

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Emigration Statistics (Ireland).—Copy presented, of Emigration Statistics of Ireland for the year 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 361

Motor Car Acts.—Copy presented, of Regulations made by the Local Government Board under the Motor Car Acts: I. Borough of East Retford; II. Borough of Guildford; III. Borough of Harrogate; IV. County of Westmorland; V. County of West Suffolk (Newmarket) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 361

MOTOR CAR ACTS.—Copy presented, of Order of the Local Government Board, amending the Motor Car (Registration and Licensing) Order, 1903, relating to the County of London [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 362

MOTOR CAR ACTS.—Copy presented, of General Order entitled The Heavy Motor Car (Amendment) Order, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 362

PUBLIC OFFICES (ACQUISITION OF SITE) ACT, 1895, SESSION 2; PUBLIC OFFICES (WESTMINSTER) SITE ACT, 1896; PUBLIC OFFICES (WHITEHALL) SITE ACT, 1897; PUBLIC BUILDINGS EXPENSES ACT, 1898; AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS EXPENSES ACT, 1903.—Account presented, showing the moneys issued out of the Consolidated Fund, the moneys borrowed and the securities created in respect thereof, the disposal of moneys issued to the National Debt Commissioners for temporary investment, and the expenditure under the provisions of the Acts to the 31st March, 1906; together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 61] 362

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.—Copy presented, of Fifty-ninth Report from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England, with an Appendix [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 362

TUBERCULOSIS (HUMAN AND BOVINE) (ROYAL COMMISSION).—Copy presented, of Second Interim Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the relations of Human and Animal Tuberculosis. Part II. Appendix. Vol. IV. Histological and Bacteriological Investigations, by Arthur Eastwood, M.D. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 362

MINES AND QUARRIES (WINGATE GRANGE COLLIERY EXPLOSION).—Copy presented, of Report of the Secretary of State for the Home Department by A. H. Ruegg, Esq., K.C., and J. B. Atkinson, Esq., M.Sc., two of His Majesty's Inspectors of Mines, on the circumstances attending an Explosion which occurred at Wingate Grange Colliery on the 14th October, 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 362

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES).—Copy presented, of Draft Rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Prisons Acts, 1877 and 1898, with respect to the constitution of the Visiting Committee of Bristol Prison [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 363

BUTTER AND MARGARINE BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Enactments applied or adapted by the Butter and Margarine Bill."—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 62] 363

RATHMINES AND RATHGAR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.—Return ordered, "of the following Papers in respect of the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council, viz.:—(1) the Auditor's Reports for the years ending the 31st day of March 1905, and the 31st day of March 1906; (2) written objections by ratepayers, Messrs. O'Driscoll, Moran, Rattigan, and Sullivan, to items in the account for the year 1906; (3) Auditor's reasons for decisions in respect of the same; (4) terms of appeal to the Local Government Board by Mr. Sullivan; (5) Local Government Board's decision, No. 54,638, 1906; (6) any correspondence on the matter between the Local Government Board and the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council."—(*Mr. John O'Connor*) 363

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Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald (Leicester) 368
Mr. Wilkie (Dundee) 372

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 376

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Henry Craik.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

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The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, N.) 389
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Captain Craig (Down, E.) .. 411
Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) .. 413
Mr. Cochrane (Ayrshire, N.) .. 415

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 227 ; Noes, 52. (Division List No. 32.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc."—(*Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald.*)

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) .. 419
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Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 231 ; Noes, 52. (Division List No. 33.)

Education Acts Amendment Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. W. R. Rea (Scarborough) .. 425
Mr. Parker (Halifax) .. 427
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Mr. Lough, Islington, W.) .. 427
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Mr. Butcher (Cambridge University) .. 430
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Mr. W. R. Rea rose in his place and claimed to move, " That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc."—(*Mr. Walter Rea.*)

Debate arising.

And, it being after Five of the clock, and objection being taken to further proceeding, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

NEW BILLS.

Public Health Officers.—Bill to amend the Law relating to the qualification and tenure of office of Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors; and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster, Sir Francis S. Powell, Sir John Tuke, and Mr. Rainy 432

Public Health Officers Bill.—" To amend the Law relating to the qualifition and tenure of office of Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors and for other purposes," presented, and read a first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 85] 432

Housing of the Working Classes Acts Amendment.—Bill to amend the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and otherwise to facilitate the building of houses for the working classes in rural districts, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster, Sir Francis Channing, Mr. Soames, Mr. Eve, Mr. Hart-Davies, and Mr. Nicholls 432

Housing of the Working Classes Acts Amendment Bill.—" To amend the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and otherwise to facilitate the building of houses for the working classes in rural districts," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 86] 432

Selection (Standing Committees).—Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection, That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law: Sir Lewis M'Iver; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. MacIver.

Report to lie upon the Table 432

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at three minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 4th MARCH, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read: Counsel called in: Witnesses examined. Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^a. The same was agreed to. Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committe of the Whole House To-morrow 433

Fitzgerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read: Counsel called in: Witnesses examined. Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^a. The same was agreed to. Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow 433

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The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House; That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Buckhaven Dock; Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways.

Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Simon-Carves Bye-Product Coke Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited (Petition for Bill).

And also the Certificates that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: South Lincolnshire Water [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 433

Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Presented, and read 1ª 433

Medway Lower Navigation Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The orders made on Wednesday and Thursday last discharged and Bill committed 433

Manchester Ship Canal (Bridgewater Canal) Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The orders made on Wednesday and Thursday last discharged, and Bill committed 434

Royal Insurance Company Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The order made on Wednesday last discharged, and Bill committed 434

Colne Valley Water Bill [H.L.]; Portishead District Water Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 434

Great Yarmouth Waterworks and Lowestoft Water and Gas Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 434

National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed 434

York and District Tramways Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The order of Thursday last, discharged. Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with 434

Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Bill [H.L.]; Devonport Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]; Middlesbrough Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Oxford and District Tramways Bill [H.L.]—Report from the Committee of Selection; That the Lord Leith of Fyvie be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Hylton, and that the Lord Leith of Fyvie be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to 434

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QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY.—Annual report and accounts of the Governors for the year ended 31st December, 1906 435

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Surinam.—Agreement between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Dutch Colony of Surinam, dated 29th April, 1906, to 7th November, 1906.

Honduras.—Agreement between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Republic of Honduras, dated 12th October, 1906, to 10th December, 1906.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 435

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INDIA OFFICE ESTABLISHMENT.—Order in Council, dated 21st December, 1906, approving new and revised appointments and alterations of salaries, etc., in the establishment of the Secretary of State for India in Council.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 436

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SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM.—Statement of the funds of Sir John Soane's Museum, 5th January, 1907. Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 436

Judicature Bill [H.L.]. [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 436

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

The Marquess of Lansdowne 438
The Lord Chancellor 439

Further debate adjourned to Thursday next.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 4TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz.: Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (Additional Capital) Bill; Barry Railway Bill; South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill; Great Central Railway Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 439

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the following Bill, introduced pursuant to the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with, viz.:—Buckhaven Dock [Lords] 440

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH.)—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—Simon Carves' Bye-Product Coke-Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited, Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 440

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AUSTRALIA.—Copy presented, of Correspondence with the Governor-General of Australia on the subject of Suez Canal Transit Dues [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 441

ARMY.—Copy presented, of Draft Order in Council declaring what is requisite to entitle a Volunteer or Volunteer Engineer Corps, Volunteer Divisions of Submarine Miners, and Volunteer Electrical Engineers to be deemed an efficient Volunteer [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 441

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AGRARIAN OUTRAGE COMPENSATION CLAIM AT MONAGHAN.—Questions, Mr. Liddell and Mr. Hayden; Answers, Mr. Birrell 491

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LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN COUNTY ANTRIM.—Question, Mr. Moore; Answer, Mr. Birrell 494

LAURAGH TEACHER'S RESIDENCE.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Runciman 495

IRISH BOARD OF WORKS.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Runciman 495

PUBLIC WORKS LOANS IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, Mr. Runciman 495

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS "FAIR WAGES" CLAUSE.—Questions, Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Fenwick (Northumberland, Wansbeck); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs) 496

LORDS AND COMMONS.—Question, Mr. Mackarness; Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 496

TRANSVAAL AND THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE.—Question, Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 497

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—Sir Berkeley George Digby Sheffield, baronet, for the County of Lincoln, North Lindsey or Brigg Division 497

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMAN'S PANEL).—Mr. STUART WORTLEY reported from the Chairman's Panel; That they had appointed Mr. Stuart Wortley to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee for the consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure; and Mr. Eugene Wason to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee for the consideration of Bills relating to Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY further reported from the Chairman's Panel; That they had agreed to the following Resolution, That any Member of the Chairman's Panel be and he is thereby empowered to ask any other Member of the Chairman's Panel to take his place in case of necessity.

Reports to lie upon the Table 497

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, in respect of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill: Mr. Tomkinson, Mr. Barker, and Mr. Laurence Hardy; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Cathcart Wason, Mr. Smeaton, and Mr. Carlile.

Report to lie upon the Table 498

NEW BILLS.

Character Note Bill.—"To make it compulsory upon employers to supply a Reference Note to a person leaving their employment and desiring one," presented by Mr. Bell; supported by Mr. Thomas Frederick Richards, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Raphael, and Mr. G. J. Wardle; to be read a second time upon Friday, 5th April, and to be printed. [Bill 87] 498

Local Authorities' Officers Bill.—"To enable Local Authorities to adopt the provisions of The Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act, 1896, and to give Officers of such Authorities a right to appeal," presented by Mr. Luke White; supported by Mr. Barnard, Captain Balfour, Sir Joseph Leese, Mr. Napier, and Mr. Henry Forster; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 88] 498

Railway Tickets Bill.—"To prevent a Time Limit being set upon the use of Passenger Tickets," presented by Mr. Morton; supported by Mr. Rowlands, Mr. Ernest Lamb, Mr. Weir; Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Sir Howard Vincent; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 89] 499

Public Libraries Bill.—"To amend the Acts relating to Public Libraries," presented by Mr. Tennant; supported by Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Mackarness, Mr. Morrell, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Middlemore, Sir William Holland, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Sir Charles Schwann, and Mr. Harmood-Banner; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 90] 499

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Limited Partnerships Bill.—" To establish Limited Partnerships," presented by Sir William Holland; supported by Mr. Cave, Mr. Holden, Mr. Isaacs, and Mr. Shackleton; to be read a second time upon Friday, 15th March, and to be printed. [Bill 91] 500

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY, AND TERRITORIAL AND RESERVE FORCES BILL).

Motion made, and Question put, " That the proceedings in Committee or on Report of Supply, or upon the introduction of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, if under consideration at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 248; Noes, 83. (Division List No. 34) .. 500

Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill.

The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Haldane, Haddington*) 503

Motion made and Question proposed, " That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the reorganisation of His Majesty's Military Forces, and for that purpose to authorise the establishment of county associations and the raising and maintenance of a Territorial Force, and for amending the Acts relating to the Reserve Forces."—(*Mr. Haldane.*)

Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) 524
Sir J. Dickson-Poynder (*Wiltshire, Chippenham*) 536
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Sir W. Evans Gordon (*Tower Hamlets, Stepney*) 582
Mr. Wyndham (*Dover*) 587
Mr. Haldane 591
Mr. Carlile (*Hertfordshire, St. Albans*) 593

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Haldane and Mr. Buchanan.

Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill.—" To provide for the reorganisation of His Majesty's Military Forces and for that purpose to authorise the establishment of County Associations and the raising and maintenance of a Territorial Force, and for amending the Acts relating to the Reserve Forces," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 92.]

Adjourned at twenty-six minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1907.

LUCAS PEERAGE.—Petition of Auberon Thomas Herbert, the claimant to the Barony of Lucas of Cradwell, that he may be permitted first to have discussed and decided by this House the question whether the said peerage descends as of right to the Petitioner, such question depending upon the interpretation to be placed upon the Clause of Limitation in the Patent of Peerage (and the confirmatory Act of 15 Charles II., cxv.), and the validity of such clauses; and that the further question of abeyance be postponed for the future consideration of this House if it should decide against the Petitioner's contention that he is entitled to a Writ of Summons as of right; and also that he may be permitted to refer in his printed case and in any proceedings which may follow in this House to the documentary and other printed evidence in the case of the Lord Great Chamberlain determined by this House in the year 1902; read, and referred to the Committee for Privileges 597

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—London County Council (Tramways and Improvements).

The same was ordered to lie on the Table 597

Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Presented; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 597

Heywood and Middleton Water Board Bill [H.L.]—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 25th of February and Thursday last discharged, and Bill committed 597

Devonport Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 25th of February and Thursday last discharged, and Bill committed 598

Kendal Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Sheffield Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Sutton Coldfield Rectory Bill [H.L.]—Reports from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table 598

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): An Amendment made: Standing Committee negatived: The Report of Amendment to be received To-morrow 598

Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order); Amendments made: Standing Committee negatived: The Report of Amendments to be received To-morrow 598

PETITIONS.

COMPANIES (DEBENTURES AND DEBENTURE STOCK) BILL [H.L.].—Petitions in favour of: of Central Association of Bankers; Institute of Directors; Committee for General Purposes of the Stock Exchange; London Chamber of Commerce Incorporated; Institute of Chartered Accountants; Banny Brothers and Company, Limited; Phœnix Assurance Company; Alliance Assurance, Limited, and others; Sun Insurance Office and other Companies; Equitable Life Assurance Company and another Company; British and Mercantile Assurance Company and another Company; Royal Exchange Assurance Company and another Company; and the Guardian Assurance Company, Limited, and another Company; Read, and ordered to lie on the Table 598

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSION.—Fifty-sixth Report from the Church Estates Commissioners, for the year preceding 1st March, 1907; Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table 598

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.—Report from, That the Committee have nominated the following Lords to serve on the Standing Committee—

L. Archbp. of Canterbury.
L. Chancellor.
L. Archbp. of York.
E. Crewe. (*L. President.*)
M. Ripon. (*L. Privy Seal.*)
D. Bedford.
D. Devonshire.
D. Northumberland.
M. Winchester.
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
M. Linlithgow.
E. Liverpool. (*L. Steward.*)
E. Derby.
E. Denbigh.
E. Stamford.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Jersey.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Carnwath.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Portsmouth.
E. Clarendon.
E. Cadogan.
E. Malmesbury.
E. Westmeath.
E. Craven.
E. Onslow.
E. Beauchamp.
E. Stradbroke.
E. Vane. (*M. Londonderry.*)
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
E. Lichfield.
E. Yarborough.
E. Russell.

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E. Dartrey.
E. Faversham.
E. Lytton.
E. Ancaster.
E. Halsbury.
E. Plymouth.
V. Falkland.
V. Hutchinson. (*E. Donoughmore.*)
V. Cross.
V. Knutsford.
V. Llandaff.
V. Ridley.
V. Churchill.
V. Selby.
V. St. Aldwyn.
L. Bp. London.
L. Bp. Hereford.
L. Bp. Southwark.
L. Hastings.
L. Clinton.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Clifford of Chudleigh.
L. Barnard.
L. Saltoun.
L. Balfour.
L. Monson.
L. Kenyon.
L. Stewart of Garlies. (*E. Galloway.*)
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Harris.
L. Colchester.
L. Ranfurly. (*E. Ranfurly.*)
L. Rosebery. (*E. Rosebery.*)
L. Kilmarnock. (*E. Errol.*)
L. Poltimore.
L. Denman.
L. Oranmore and Browne.
L. Kintore. (*E. Kintore.*)
L. Elgin. (*E. Elgin and Kincardine.*)
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Kinnaird.
L. Lawrence.
L. Castletown.
L. Wolverton.
L. Sandhurst.
L. Ampthill.
L. Reay.
L. Tweedmouth.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Herries.
L. Monkswell.
L. Ashbourne.
L. Montagu of Beaulieu.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Newton.

L. Stanmore.
L. Burghclere.
L. James.
L. Heneage.
L. Ludlow.
L. Newlands.
L. Avebury.
L. Alverstone.
L. Shuttleworth.
L. Waleran.
L. Knaresborough.
L. Desborough.
L. Weardale.
L. Haversham.

Read, and ordered to lie on the Table. 599

Companies (Debentures and Debenture Stock) Bill [H.L.]—[SECOND READING].—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Avebury 600

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Avebury.*)

The Earl of Granard 601
Lord Avebury 602
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 602

On Question, Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Australian States Constitution Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 602

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz. :—London Port and Docks Bill.

Ordered, that the Bill be read a second time 603

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Private Bill Petitions (Standing Orders not Complied with).—Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—London County Council (Tramways and Improvements).

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 603

Gas Companies (Removal of Sulphur Restrictions) Bill; Mitcham and Wimbledon District Gas Bill; Swansea Harbour Bill (by Order); Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed 603

Standing Orders.—Ordered, That Mr. Crombie be discharged from the Select Committee on Standing Orders and that Mr. Eugene Wason be added.—(*Mr. Ellis.*)

Standing Orders.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee :

" That, in the case of the Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers), Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the Condition that Clause 18 is modified, so as to apply only to the intended railways and to those companies concerned whose shareholders approve thereof : —That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

" That in the case of the Boston Spa Gas, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties ought be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

" That, in the case of the Burnley Corporation, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for the Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill."

" That in the case of the Great Northern and City Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of ' Milner's Safe Company,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

" That, in the case of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of ' Walter Clarkson,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

" That, in the case of the Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of ' National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

" That, in the case of the Barry Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of ' National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Cardiff Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That in the case of the Taff Vale Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That in the case of the Bristol Corporation Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

Resolutions agreed to 603

Selection (Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) (Commissioners).—Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That, in pursuance of the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, they had selected the following Fifteen Members to form the Parliamentary Panel of Members of this House to act as Commissioners: Mr. M'Crae, Sir John Tuke, Mr. Levy, Mr. Weir, Mr. Findlay, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. John Dewar, Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Wilkie, Mr. Bell, Major Anstruther-Gray, Mr. Ernest Gardner, Viscount Dalrymple, and Mr. M'Callum.

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PETITIONS.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.—Petitions in favour; from Bullgill; Broughton Moor; Buckhill; Camerton; Clowne; Gillhead; Seymour; and, Stanley Common Collieries; to lie upon the Table 606

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday.—Two Petitons from Northampton, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table 606

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Trial of Election Petitions, 1906–7).—Return [presented 4th March] to be printed. [No. 65] 606

Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1907–8 (Vote on Account).—Estimate presented,—showing the several Services for which a Vote on Account is required for the year ending 31st March, 1908 [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 64] .. 606

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NAVY (DOCKYARD EXPENSE ACCOUNTS, 1905–6).—Annual Accounts presented,—for 1905–6 of Shipbuilding and Dockyard Transactions, etc., with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 66] 606

NAVY (VICTUALLING YARD MANUFACTURING ACCOUNTS, 1905–6).—Annual Accounts presented,—of the Cost of Manufacturing Provisions, Victualling Stores, etc., at the Home Victualling Yards and Malta Yard for 1905–6, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 67] 606

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NAVAL WORKS.—Copy presented, of Statement showing the total estimated Cost of each Work as shown in The Naval Works Act, 1905, and as subsequently revised, the estimated Expenditure thereon during 1907–8 and 1908–9, and the expected date of Completion [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 607

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Visit of the Colonial Premiers.—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton (Canterbury); The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannermann (Stirling Burghs) 651

New Member Sworn.—George Birnie Esselmont, esquire, for the Parliamentary Burgh of Aberdeen, South Division 652

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Maddison, and Mr. Cathcart Wason (added in respect of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill); and had appointed in substitution: Mr. W. E. Harvey and Mr. Stephen Collins (in respect of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee, That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill: Mr. Lough, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Wilkie, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Barnes, Mr. M‘Crae, Mr. Halley Stewart, Sir Henry Craik, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Tyson Wilson, Sir William Collins, Mr. James Mason, and Mr. Bridgeman.

Reports to lie upon the Table 652

NEW BILLS.

Hours of Labour (Bakehouses) Bill.—" To restrict the Hours of Labour in Bakehouses to forty-eight hours per week," presented by Mr. Wilkie; supported by Mr. Steadman, Mr. Gill, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Bell, Mr. Barnes, Mr. James Haslam, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Thorne; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed. [Bill 93] 653

Prevention of Cruelty to Children Bill.—" To amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904," presented by Mr. Bramsdon; supported by Mr. Cave, Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Luke White, Sir Henry Craik, Mr. Godfrey Baring, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Courthope, Mr. Maclean, and Mr. Barrie; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 94] 653

Feus and Building Leases (Scotland) Bill.—" To amend the Law relating to Feus and Leases for Building in Scotland," presented by Mr. Findlay; supported by Sir Andrew Torrance, Mr. Beale, Mr. Hodge, Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Mr. Menzies, and Mr. Eugene Wason; to be read a second time upon Friday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 95] 653

Judicature (Ireland) Bill.—" To provide for the abolition of two Judgeships of the High Court in Ireland, and to reduce the Salary of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Birrell; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 96] 653

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.—Ordered, That Mr. Holden be discharged from the Public Accounts Committee.

Ordered, That Sir Robert Hobart be added.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 653

HOUSE OF COMMONS (KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS).—Ordered, That Sir Robert Hobart be discharged from the Kitchen and Refreshment Committee.

Ordered " That Mr. Osmond Williams be added."—(*Mr. Whiteley*) .. 653

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SUPPLY (NAVY ESTIMATES).—Order for Committee read.

The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee) .. 654

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Mr. Arthur Lee (Hants, Fareham) .. 664
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs) .. 672
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) .. 675
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) .. 684
Mr. Murray Macdonald (Falkirk Burghs) .. 694
Mr. Brace (Glamorganshire, S.) .. 700
Mr. Bellairs (Lynn Regis) .. 702
Mr. Cowan (Guildford, Surrey) .. 708

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House affirms its adherence to the two-Power standard of naval strength, as defined by successive Cabinets, to mean that the annual shipbuilding programme should be framed so as to give the British Navy a margin of superiority over the two strongest naval Powers in the number of efficient armoured ships intended to be used as battleships, together with such a superiority in the number of efficient cruisers as will enable them adequately to perform their work as scouts, look-out vessels, and commerce defenders in a war with the two strongest naval Powers.' "—(*Mr. Bellairs.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman .. 710
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) .. 711
Captain Hervey (Bury St. Edmunds) .. 712

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) .. 712
Mr. Courthope, (Sussex Rye) .. 715

Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham), in the Chair.]

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NAVY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, including 18,595 Royal Marines."

Mr. Courthope 716

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, further proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

Armagh Urban District Council Bill (BY ORDER).—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Lonsdale (Armagh, Mid.) 717
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 722

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Lonsdale.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Moore (Armagh, N.) 723
The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool Exchange) .. 726
Mr. James Campbell (Dublin University) 729
Mr. Mooney (Newry) 731
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 732

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 243; Noes, 67. (Division List No. 35.)

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 238; Noes, 73. (Division List No. 36.)

Bill read a second time and committed.

SUNDAY CLOSING.

Mr. Nicholls (Northamptonshire, N.) 741
Mr. Thomas Richards (Monmouthshire, W.) 745

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, with a view to limit the excessive hours of work on licensed premises, to diminish drinking, to prevent unfair competition with other traders, and to secure a better observance of Sunday, this House records its opinion that licensed premises in England, as in other parts of the British Empire, should be closed on Sundays."—(*Mr. Nicholls.*)

Mr. Akers Douglas (Kent, St. Augustine's) 748
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) 750
Mr. Bottomley (Hackney, S.) 755

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

Education Acts Amendment Bill—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [1st March], " That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc. " :—

Question again proposed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion made, and Question, " That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc."—(*Mr. Walter Rea*)—put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY (NAVY ESTIMATES).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, " That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, including 18,595 Royal Marines," resumed :—

Question again proposed.

And it being after Eleven of the Clock, and objection being taken to further proceeding, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again to-morrow 756

Adjourned at four minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 6TH MARCH, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways Bill [H.L.] ; Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill ; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill ; Boston Spa Gas Bill ; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill ; Simon-Carves Bye-Product Coke Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited—(Petition for Bill). Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday next 757

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Amendment reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow 757

Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow 757

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NAVAL WORKS.—Statement showing the total estimated cost of each work as shown in the Naval Works Act, 1905, and as subsequently revised, the estimated expenditure thereon during 1907–1908, and 1908–1909, and the expected date of completion.

Memorandum showing progress and expenditure, etc., on items included in the Naval Works Act 757

BOARD OF EDUCATION.—Report made in pursuance of 16th and 17th Vict., chap. 137, s. 60, in the matter of the charity known as the Hulme Trust Estates.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 757

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.—Report from, That the Committee have nominated the following Lords to serve as Chairmen of the Standing Committee :

E. Crewe (*L. President*).
E. Onslow.
E. Camperdown.
V. Cross.
V. St. Aldwyn.
L. Balfour.
L. Burghclere.

Read, and ordered to lie on the Table 758

STANDING COMMITTEE.—Report from the Committee of Chairmen of the Standing Committee, That they have appointed the Viscount Cross Chairman of the Standing Committee ; read and ordered to lie on the Table .. 758

SMALL HOLDINGS.

The Earl of Onslow 758
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 760
The Marquess of Lansdowne 761

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, Half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 6TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—Petitions in favour—from Grange, Harrington, Kilburn, and Mitchell's Main Collieries ; to lie upon the Table .. 762

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EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Old Monkland, against; to lie upon the Table 763

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petition from Ilfracombe, against; to lie upon the Table 763

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.—Petition from Ringstead, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table 763

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—Petitions in favour from Brentwood, Bromley, Ladybank and Tynemouth; to lie upon the Table 763

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.—Copy presented, of Report of the Board of Education in the matter of the Charity known as the Hulme Trust Estates (Educational) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 763

NATIONAL GALLERY (REPORT).—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 5th March; *Mr. Runciman*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 68] 763

STANDING COMMITTEES.—Ordered, That all Standing Committees have leave to print and circulate with the Votes the Minutes of their Proceedings and any amended Clauses of Bills committed to them.—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley*) 763

POST OFFICE (LIVERPOOL AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).—Copy ordered, "of the Contract, dated the 2nd day of February, 1907, with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the conveyance of the Mails, Troops, and Stores between Liverpool and Hong Kong, for the period from the 7th day of April, 1906, to the 6th day of April, 1908, together with a Copy of the Treasury Minute thereon, dated the 27th day of February, 1907."—(*Mr. Runciman.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 69] 764

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

NAVAL WORKS ACTS, 1895-1905.—Question, Mr. Russell Rea (Gloucester); Answer, Mr. Edmund Robertson 764

GRANTS IN AID OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Goddard (Ipswich); Answer, Mr. McKenna 767

WELSH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—MR. DAVIES' KNOWLEDGE OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE.—Question, Mr. D. A. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. McKenna 767

THE LETTERKENNY AND BURTONPORT RAILWAY.—Question, Mr. C. McVeigh (Donegal, E.); Answer, Mr. Kearley 768

INCREASE IN EXPORTS OF BRITISH MANUFACTURES.—Question, Mr. H. Cox (Preston); Answer, Mr. Kearley 768

UNITED STATES AND FREE ZONES.—Question, Mr. H. Cox; Answer, Mr. Kearley 769

THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY AND THE LONDON MUNICIPAL SOCIETY.—Question, Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland); Answer, Mr. Kearley 770

LABOURERS ACT 1906—USE OF FORM 6.—Question, Mr. Ginnell (Westmeath, N.); Answer, Mr. Cherry 770

IRISH STONE FOR HAULBOWLINE EXTENSIONS.—Question, Captain Donelan (Cork, E.); Answer, Mr. Lambert 771

LICENCE OF GEORGE INN, HUBBERHOLME, AND THE LIVING OF HUBBERHOLME.—Question, Mr. G. Lough (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton); Answer, Mr. Stuart Wortley 771

MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION—APPLICATION FOR TREASURY GRANT.—Question, Mr. H. H. Marks (Kent, Thanet); Answer, Mr. Asquith 772

LOW VALUE OF IRISH LAND STOCK.—Questions, Mr. Mond (Chester); Answer, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Runciman 773

FALL IN TRADE WITH PERSIA BY THE QUETTA-NUSHKI ROUTE.—Question, Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs); Answer, Mr. Morley 773

REPRESENTATION OF THE PLANTING INDUSTRY ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.—Question, Mr. Rees; Answer, Mr. Morley 774

CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND THE IMPORTATION AND TAXATION OF INDIAN OPIUM.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Morley 774

SAVING EFFECTED ON EXPIRY OF NEW SYSTEM OF SERVICE AND PROFICIENCY PAY.—Question, Mr. P. Pease (Darlington); Answer, Mr. Haldane .. 774

CONDITION OF JOINERS' WORK IN WOOLWICH ARSENAL.—Question, Mr. W. T. Wilson (Lancashire, Westhoughton); Answer, Mr. Haldane 775

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OF IRISH MILITIA.—Question, Mr. C. Craig (Down, E.); Answer, Mr. Haldane 775

VOLUNTEER REGULATIONS.—Question, Sir H. Vincent (Sheffield, Central); Answer, Mr. Haldane 775

EVICTIONS ON THE CLANRICARDE ESTATES.—Question, Mr. Fetherstonhaugh (Fermanagh, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 776

TOBACCO GROWING IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Murphy (Kerry, E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 778

JAMAICA EARTHQUAKE—SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.—Question, Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.); Answer, Mr. Churchill 778

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ASSISTANT CLERKS IN THE CUSTOMS STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, Mr. Runciman 779

PROMOTION IN THE IRISH BOARD OF WORKS, DUBLIN.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Runciman 780

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NORTH SEA CONVENTION, 1882.—Question, Mr. Morton (Sutherland); Answer, Mr. Runciman 785

TRAWLING IN THE NORTH SEA.—Question, Mr. J. C. Wason (Orkney and Shetland); Answer, Mr. Runciman 786

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LUTTERWORTH RABBIT SNARING CONVICTIONS.—Question, Mr. Lehmann (Leicestershire, Market Harborough); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 787

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SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Question, Mr. Morton (Sutherland); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs) 821

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Partington (Derbyshire, High Peak); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman .. 821

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Question, Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 821

NEW BILLS.

School Boards Conferences (Scotland) Bill.—"To provide for expenses incurred in School Boards in Scotland in relation to School Board Conferences," presented by Mr. Eugene Wason; supported by Mr. Cochrane, Mr. Crombie, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson, and Mr. Younger; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th March, and to be printed. [Bill 97] 821

Outdoor Relief (Pensioners) Bill.—"To place Naval, Army, and Civil Pensioners in the same position as members of Friendly Societies, in respect of Outdoor Relief," presented by Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald; supported by Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Richards, Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Crooks; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 21st March, and to be printed. [Bill 98] 822

Purchase of Land (England and Wales) Bill.

Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 822

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide facilities for the sale of land to occupying tenants; and to extend the system of peasant proprietary in England and Wales."—(*Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald (Leicester) 824

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Herbert Roberts, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Colonel Lockwood, Sir Frederick Carne Rasch, Mr. Courthope, Sir Berkeley Sheffield, and Mr. Ernest Gardiner.

Purchase of Land (England and Wales) Bill.—"To provide facilities for the sale of land to occupying tenants; and to extend the system of peasant proprietary in England and Wales," presented accordingly and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 99] 825

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATE, 1906–7.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for Additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army Services, viz.:—

Vote 5. Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowance, &c. - - - -	439,000
Vote 12. Miscellaneous Effective Services - - - -	20,000
	459,000
Less Surpluses on other Votes - - - - - -	458,900
	100"

The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Haldane, Haddington) 826
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 827
Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central) 833
Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) 833
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 834

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £50, be granted for the said Service."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

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Mr. Morton (Sutherland) 836
Mr. Haldane 837
Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) 838
Mr. George Faber (York) 839
Mr. Victor Cavendish (Derbyshire, W.) 840
The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.) 842
Mr. Rawlinson (Cambridge University) 843
Mr. Abel Smith (Hertfordshire, Hertford) 844
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 845
Mr. Cochrane (Ayrshire, N.) 848
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 849
Mr. Haldane 849
Sir J. Randles (Cumberland, Cockermouth) 850

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 88 ; Noes, 299. (Division List No. 37.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain 853
Mr. Haldane 854
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 855
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 856
Mr. Haldane 857

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow ; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY REPORT [26TH FEBRUARY].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1906–7.

CLASS V.

1. “That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £32,470, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in-Aid.

CLASS VII.

. “That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and other expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries.”

SUPPLY [26TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

First Resolution read a second time.

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Mr. Ashley 857
Mr. Hicks Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 859
Mr. Morton 861
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) 863
The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.) 864
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 869
Lord R. Cecil 872
Mr. Stanley Wilson (Yorks, E.R., Holderness) 872
Viscount Helmsley, Yorks, N.R., Thirsk) 874
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 874
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 875

First Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) 876

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£10,000,' and insert '£9,000,'—(*Mr. Dillon,*)—"instead thereof."

Question proposed, "That '£10,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.) 881
Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 883

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, further proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

RAILWAY SERVANTS (HOURS OF LABOUR).

Mr. W. E. Harvey (Derbyshire, N.E.) 885
Mr. Bell (Derby) 889

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House disapproves of engine drivers, firemen, guards, and other classes of railway employees being compelled to be on duty during excessive hours and being allowed but short intervals of rest, and urges upon the Government the necessity of applying more vigorously The Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, and, if this is inefficient, to prepare an Amendment to the Act."—(*Mr. William Edwin Harvey.*)

Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 900
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 906
Mr. Wardle (Stockport) 908
Mr. Hudson (Newcastle-on-Tyne) 910

Amendment proposed—

"In line 4, to leave out from the word 'Government,' to the end of the Question, and to add the words 'the necessity of amending The Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, providing for a limitation of the hours to be worked on any one day, and for a compulsory notification of all exceptions thereto by the companies themselves, thus removing the onus of complaint from the men.' "—(*Mr. Wardle.*)

Question proposed, " That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The President of the Board of Trade (*Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs*) 913
Colonel Lockwood (*Essex, Epping*) 919

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 205 ; Noes, 50. (Division List No. 38.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, " That this House disapproves of engine drivers, firemen, guards, and other classes of railway employees being compelled to be on duty during excessive hours and being allowed but short intervals of rest, and urges upon the Government the necessity of applying more vigorously The Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, and, if this is inefficient, to prepare an Amendment to the Act."

SUPPLY [26TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.—Postponed Proceeding on Amendment to Second Resolution reported from the Committee of Supply.

CLASS VII.

2. " That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries."

Which Amendment was—

" To leave out '£10,000,' and insert '£9,000.' "

Question again proposed, " That '£10,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

And, it being after Eleven of the Clock, and objection being taken to further Proceeding, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next 923

ADJOURNMENT.—Motion made, and Question proposed, " That the House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Sir A. Acland-Hood (*Somersetshire, Wellington*) 923
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. George Whiteley, Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey*) 924

Adjourned at a quarter after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 7TH MARCH, 1907.

The Right Hon. Sir RICHARD HENN COLLINS, late Master of the Rolls, having been appointed a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary under the provisions of the Appellate Jurisdiction Act, 1876, with the dignity of a Baron for life, by the style and title of Baron Collins of Kensington, in the county of London, was (in the usual manner) introduced 925

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Limited; Renfrewshire Upper District (Eastwood and Mearns) Water Electric Supply Corporation; Royal Bank of Scotland; Glasgow Corporation; Aberdeen Corporation; Electric Supply Corporation (No. 2).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 925

Standing Orders Committee—Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Barry Railway Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that the powers to take the waters of the streams known as the Rhydwaedlyd, the Nant-cwm-Nofydd, and the Nant-y-Briwnant be struck out of the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Rawtenstall Corporation Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 10, 11, and 11A be struck out of the Bill: And

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill be allowed to proceed.

Read, and agreed to 925

Buckhaven Dock Bill [H.L.].—Presented; read 1^{a}; and referred to the Examiners 925

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London Bill [H.L.].—Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table .. 926

Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill; Boston Spa Gas Bill; South-Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill; Simon-Carves Bye-Product Coke Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited—(Petition for Bill). The Order of yesterday referring the Examiner's certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee, discharged; and the said certificates referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Thursday next 926

Kendal Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to order), and committed; The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection .. 926

Sutton Coldfield Rectory Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to order) and committed 926

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a} (according to order), and committed 926

Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The orders made on the 27th of February and Thursday last discharged and Bill committed for Tuesday next 926

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.]; Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 926

PETITION.

Alleynes Grammar School (Uttoxeter).—Petition of Thomas Allen, praying that leave may be granted to Mr. A. F. Loch, Charity Commissioner, to circulate among members of the Legislature, the Press, and teachers' associations, copies of his confidential report on Alleynes Grammar School, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 926

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Colonial Conference, 1907.—Correspondence relating to the Colonial Conference, 1907 (in continuation of [Cd. 3337], February, 1907) 927

Australia.—Customs Tariff (British Preference), 1906, Revised Act, with a despatch from the Secretary of State thereon.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table 927

Standing Committee.—Report from the Committee of Selection for the Standing Committee that they have added the Lord Saye and Sele to the Standing Committee; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 927

NEW BILL.

Companies Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to amend the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1900. Was presented by the Lord Granard (*E. Granard*); read 1^{a}; to be printed; and to be read 2^{a} on Thursday next. (No. 10) 927

Judicature Bill [H.L.].—Debate on the Motion for the Second Reading resumed (according to order).

Lord Ashbourne 927
Lord Alverstone 931
Lord Ampthill 934
Earl Russell 935
Lord Coleridge 936
Lord Collins 937
The Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) 940
The Marquess of Lansdowne 942

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

The Public Health Acts.

The Earl of Onslow 943
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Earl Carrington) 945
Lord Courtney of Penwith 947

House of Lords (Reform) Bill [H.L.]

Lord Newton 947

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 7TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

Message from the Lords.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Reservation, for His Majesty's pleasure, of Bills passed by the Legislatures of the States forming part of the Commonwealth of Australia and to confirm certain Acts passed by those Legislatures." [Australian States Constitution Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to dissolve the marriage of Charles Edward Galwey, a Captain in the Royal Irish Regiment, with Annie Louisa Galwey, his now wife, and to enable him to marry again; and for other purposes." [Galwey's Divorce Bill [Lords.]

And, also a Bill, intituled, "An Act to dissolve the marriage of Lida Eleanor Purcell Fitz Gerald with Gerald Purcell Fitz Gerald, her present husband, and to enable her to marry again; and for other purposes." [Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [Lords.] 947

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills (Standing Order 63 complied with).—Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 63 has been complied with, viz.:—Grays and Tilbury Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 948

Private Bills (Standing Orders Applicable Thereto complied with).—Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—Leith Harbour and Docks Bill 948

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the following Bills, introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with, viz. :—General Accident, Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Limited; Renfrewshire Upper District (Eastwood and Mearns) Water; Royal Bank of Scotland; Glasgow Corporation; Aberdeen Corporation; Electric Supply Corporation (No. 2) 948

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 66 NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 66 has not been complied with, viz. :—Channel Tunnel Railway Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 948

Alexandra (Newport and South Wales Docks) and Railway (General Powers) Bill.—" To empower the Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway Company to construct new railways in the County of Monmouth, and to authorise the company to raise additional capital; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 949

Boston Spa Gas Bill.—" To incorporate and confer powers upon the Boston Spa Gas Company," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 949

Galwey's Divorce Bill [LORDS]; FITZ GERALD'S DIVORCE BILL [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time. 949

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—Petitions in favour—from Aldwarke Brayton Knowe; Halesowen; Hill and Cakemore; Lye; Moresby; Rockingham; Soothill Wood; Two Gates; and, West Kiveton Collieries; to lie upon the Table 949

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (METRIC SYSTEM) BILL.—Petition from Walsall, against; to lie upon the Table 949

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—Petitions in favour—from Gravesend and Narthfleet; and Isle of Wight; to lie upon the Table 949

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIAL CONFERENCE, 1907.—Copy presented, of correspondence relating to the Colonial Conference, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table .. 950

AUSTRALIA.—Copy presented, of the Customs Tariff (British Preference), 1906, Reserved Act, with a Despatch from the Secretary of State thereon [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 950

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PUBLIC HEALTH (REGULATIONS AS TO FOOD) BILL.—Copy ordered, "of Enactments referred to in the Bill."—(*Mr. Burns.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 70] 950

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND).—Copy ordered, "of Accounts of receipts and payments of the Accountant-General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland in respect of funds of suitors in the said Court, including therein funds to the credit of lunacy accounts in the year to the 30th day of September, 1906, together with a statement of liabilities and assets and particulars of securities in Court on the 30th day of September, 1906."—(*Mr. Runciman*) 950

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' LIABILITIES.—Question, Mr. Cochrane (Ayrshire, N.); Answer, Mr. Haldane 950

ASSETS OF VOLUNTEER CORPS.—Question, Mr. Cochrane; Answer, Mr. Haldane 951

LIEUTENANT-COLONELS' INCREASED PAY.—Question, Mr. Pike Pease (Darlington); Answer, Mr. Haldane 951

GARRISON ARTILLERY REDUCTIONS.—Question, Mr. Pike Pease; Answer, Mr. Haldane 951

LORD ESHER'S MEMORANDUM.—Question, Mr. Arnold-Forster (Croydon); Answer, Mr. Haldane 952

LORD ESHER'S COMMITTEE.—Question, Mr. Arnold-Forster; Answer, Mr. Haldane 952

COST OF ORGANISING THE NEW TERRITORIAL ARMY.—Question, Mr. Nield (Middlesex, Ealing); Answer, Mr. Haldane 952

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OLD-AGE PENSIONS COMMISSION.—Question, Mr. L. Haslam; Answer, Mr. Churchill 395

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY.—Question, Mr. Remnant (Finsbury, Holborn); Answer, Mr. T. Shaw 953

SOUTH LEITH FREE CHURCH.—Question, Mr. Remnant; Answer, Mr. T. Shaw .. 953

ABSINTHE.—Question, Mr. A. C. Corbett (Glasgow, Tradeston); Answer, Mr. Gladstone 954

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE.—Question, Mr. R. Pearce (Staffordshire, Leek); Answer, Mr. J. Burns 954

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INDIAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.—Question, Sir H. Cotton (Nottingham, E.); Answer, Mr. Money 957

INDIAN NATIVES AND THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.—Question, Sir H. Cotton; Answer, Mr. Morley 957

CLARE POTATO CROP FAILURE.—Question, Mr. W. Redmond (Clare); Answer, Mr. Birrell 958

MYSHALL SANATORIUM FOR CONSUMPTIVES.—Question, Mr. A. Roche (Cork); Answer, Mr. Birrell 959

VOLUNTEER ADJUTANTS.—Question, Colonel Long (Worcestershire, Evesham); Answer, Mr. Haldane 959

WESLEYAN CHURCH AT ALDERSHOT.—Question, Mr. E. H. Lamb (Rochester); Answer, Mr. Haldane 960

COMMON RIGHTS OVER ELTHAM COMMON.—Question, Mr. Hudson (Newcastle-on-Tyne); Answer, Mr. Haldane 960

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

ADMIRALTY CONTRACLS AND THE FAIR WAGES CLAUSE.—Questions, Mr. Hudson (Newcastle-on-Tyne), Mr. Thorne; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. E. Robertson, Dundee) 960

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CHILDREN'S DEFECTIVE EYESIGHT IN IRISH SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. John Redmond (Waterford); Answer, Mr. Birrell 992

COMYN-KENNY ESTATE, GALWAY.—Question, Mr. John Roche (Galway, E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 992

COOSECROOM IMPROVEMENTS.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 993

LEAHY ESTATE, NEAR CAHIRCIVEEN.—Question, Mr. Boland; Answer, Mr. Birrell 993

IRISH DEVELOPMENT GRANT.—Question, Mr. John O'Connor (Kildare, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 993

ARTERIAL DRAINAGE (IRELAND) COMMISSION—REPORT.—Question, Mr. John O'Connor; Answer, Mr. Birrell 994

COUNT BLAKE'S GALWAY ESTATE.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 994

EXCLUDED TENANTS.—Questions, Mr. Lundon and Mr. Kilbride (Kildare, S.) Answer, Mr. Birrell 995

PRICE OF IRISH LAND.—Question, Mr. Lundon; Answer, Mr. Birrell 996

SABADOO EVICTED TENANT.—Question, Mr. C. MacVeigh (Donegal, E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 996

GRANT FOR TEACHING IRISH.—Questions, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.); Answers, Mr. Birrell and Mr. Runciman 997

CRIME IN LEITRIM.—Questions, Mr. Lonsdale (Armagh, Mid), Mr. Charles Craig (Antrim, S.) Mr. Moor (Armagh, N.) and Mr. Reddy (Kings County, Birr and Mr. Moore (Armagh, N.); Answers, Mr. Birrell 998

ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Runciman 999

LORD ESHER.—Question, Mr. Arnold-Forster (Croydon); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, Burghs) 1000

CLERKENWELL COUNTY COURT CLERK'S RETIREMENT.—Questions, Mr. Carlile and Mr. Crooks (Woolwich); Answers, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman .. 1000

THE APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES.—Questions, Mr. Hunt; Answers, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1001

THE SOUTH WALES COLLIERY EXPLOSION.—Questions, Mr. Thomas Richards (Monmouthshire, W.), Mr. Brace (Glamorganshire, S.), Mr. Chiozza-Money and Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answers, Mr. Gladstone 1001

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Lough (added in respect of the Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill); and had appointed in substitution: Mr. William Priestley (in respect of the Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill.

Report to lie upon the Table 1004

NEW BILL.

Released Persons (Poor Law Relief) Bill.—"To make better provisions as to the Relief of Persons released from detention in Prisons, Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and Inebriate Reformatories," presented by Mr. Herbert Samuel; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 100] 1004

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).—Ordered, That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), notwithstanding anything in Standing Order No. 15.—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*) 1005

SUPPLY [2ND ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.—

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, including 18,595 Royal Marines."

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Mr. Wyndham (Dover) 1005
Mr. Beauchamp (Suffolk, Stowmarket) 1011
Captain Hervey (Bury St. Edmunds) 1015
Mr. Bellairs (Lynn Regis) 1020
Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend) 1028
Mr. Murray Macdonald (Falkirk Burghs) 1034

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That 120,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the said Services."—(*Mr. Murray Macdonald.*)

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1035
The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee) .. 1041
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 1046
The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Lambert, Devonshire, South Molton) 1047
Sir J. Brunner (Cheshire, Northwich) 1050
Mr. Jenkins (Chatham) 1052

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

Great Northern and City Railway Bill [By Order].—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Morton (Sunderland) 1056

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now,' stand part of the Question."

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Kearley, Devonport) 1058

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

Supply (Navy Estimates).

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Caldwell in the Chair.]

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That 120,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the said service."—(*Mr. Murray Macdonald*)—resumed.

Question again proposed.

Mr. Jenkins 1061
Mr. Edmund Robertson 1062

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Hunt (Shropshire, Ludlow) 1063
Mr. Mallet (Plymouth) 1065
Mr. Barnes (Glasgow, Blackfriars) 1068
Mr. Bramsdon (Portsmouth) 1075
Mr. Arthur Lee (Hants, Fareham) 1079
Mr. E. H. Lamb (Rochester) 1082
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) 1082
Major Seely (Liverpool, Abercromby) 1087
Mr. Wilkie (Dundee) 1089
Sir John Benn (Devonport) 1090
Mr. Lambert 1091
Mr. Havelock Wilson (Middlesbrough) 1092

Original Question, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, including 11,595 Royal Marines," put, and agreed to.

2. £6,869,700, wages, etc., of Officers, Seamen, Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at Twenty minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 8TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.—The CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS reported, That, after conferring with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining in which House of Parliament the respective Bills under the Private Legislative Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, should be first considered, they had determined that the following Bill should originate in the House of Lords, viz.:—Aberdeen Corporation.

Report to lie upon the Table 1097

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Rawtenstall Corportion Bill. Read a second time 1097

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—Petitions in favour; from Allhallows; B. Winning; Cockermouth; Codnor; Delph; Dowlais (two); Ellenborough; Ellistown; Great Clifton; Horsley; Woodhouse; Ireland; Leven; Loscoe; Moor House Guards; Morley Main; Netherton; Oughterside; Outfield; Pentrich; Pontefract; St. Helen's; Seaton Moor Pit; Snibston; Soothill; and Wythemoor Collieries; to lie upon the Table .. 1097

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petition from Penryn, against; to lie upon the Table 1097

MUNICIPAL LOANS (PURCHASE OF LAND).—Petition from Workington, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1097

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—Petitions in favour; from Eastbourne; Ilford; Kingston; Ladybank; North Hackney; Paddington; Rastrick; Reigate; Truro; Wednesbury; and Westminister; to lie upon the Table 1097

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.—Copy presented, of Report on the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Colleges of Science and of Art, the Geological Survey and Museum, and on the work of the Solar Physics Committee for the year 1905 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1098

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND.) — Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 7th March; Mr. Runciman]; to lie upon the Table .. 1098

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

CAVAN LAND APPEAL CASES.—Question, Mr. Vincent Kennedy (Cavan, W.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1098

FAIR RENT AGREEMENTS.—Question, Mr. Vincent Kennedy; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1099

REFUSAL OF COMMISSIONERS TO SANCTION LAND SALES.—Question, Mr. Vincent Kennedy; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1099

DELAY IN ERECTION OF SCHOOL AT EMLY, TIPPERARY.—Question, Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.); Answer, Mr. Runciman 099

POOR LAW ADMINISTRATION.—Question, Mr. Pike Pease (Darlington); Answer, Mr. John Burns 1099

HOLDING OF MARTIN MAHER OF BALLINGARRY,COUNTY TIPPERARY.—Question, Mr. Kendal O'Brien (Tipperary Mid); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1100

BELFAST ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1101

APPOINTMENT OF IRISH COUNTY SURVEYORS.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1101

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INCREASED ALLOWANCE TO IRISH PRISON OFFICIALS.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1101

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Dickinson (St. Pancras, N.) 1102

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs) 1109
Mr. Whitehead (Essex, S.E.) 1112
Mr. Bertram (Herts, Hitchin) 1120

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Whitehead.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir Charles McLaren (Leicestershire, Bosworth) 1125
Sir Francis Powell (Wigan) 1128
Mr. Snowden (Blackburn) 1130
Mr. Massie (Wilts, Cricklade) 1134
Mr. Osmond Williams (Merionethshire) 1141
Sir W. Bramptan Gurdon (Norfolk, N.) 1144
Mr. Shackleton (Lancashire, Clitheroe) 1146
Mr. Cremer (Shoreditch, Haggerston) 1148
Mr. Atherley-Jones (Durham, N.W.) 1151
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 1154
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 1157
Mr. T. A. Herbert (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) 1159
Mr. Courtenay Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) 1160
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 1160

And, it being Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Political Pensions Bill—Read a second time, and committed for Friday next.

RADIOTELEGRAPHIC CONVENTION.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Radiotelegraphic Convention, signed at Berlin on the 3rd day of November, 1906, and to report what, from the point of view of national and public interests, would, in their opinion, be the effect of the adhesion or non-adhesion of this country to the Convention."

Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 1163
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. John Burns, Battersea) 1163

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Radiotelegraphic Convention, signed at Berlin on the 3rd day of November, 1906, and to report what, from the point of view of national and public interests, would, in their opinion, be the effect of the adhesion or non-adhesion of this country to the Convention.

Committee accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Adkins, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Sir John Dickson-Poynder, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Gwynn, Sir William Holland, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Arthur Lee, Mr. Macpherson, Sir Gilbert Parker, and Sir Edward Sassoon.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and record

Ordered, That Four be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at six minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 11TH MARCH, 1906.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways [H.L.]. The same was ordered to lie upon the Table 1165

Royal Bank of Scotland Bill [H.L.]; General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Limited, Bill [H.L.]. Presented; read 1^a; and referred to the Examiners 1165

Renfrewshire Upper District (Eastwood and Mearns) Water Bill [H.L.]; Glasgow Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Aberdeen Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Electric Supply Corporation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]. Presented, and read 1^a. 1165

Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.].—A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee 1165

Bryne's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had received by post from the Lord Justice of the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, a Report of the proceedings upon the inquiry before him in the case of Bryne *v.* McDowell. The same was ordered to lie on the Table 1165

Middlesborough Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The orders made on the 25th and 28th of February last discharged, and Bill committed 1165

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South Lincolnshire Water Bill [H.L.].—The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promotors do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. Order of the Day for the Second Reading read, and discharged. Ordered that the Bill be not further proceeded with 1165

Burnham (Somerset) Pier Bill. [H.L.]; Manchester Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Tyne Improvement Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Headley be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Viscount Iveagh; read, and agreed to 1166

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES: ANNUAL.—No. 519. East Africa Protectorate (Report for 1905–1906) 1166

BOARD OF EDUCATION (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, ETC.)—Report for the year 1905 on the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Colleges of Science and of Art, the Geological Survey and Museum, and on the work of the Solar Physics Committee 1166

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Code of Regulations for Day Schools, 1907; with Appendices.

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 9th March, 1907, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant .. 1166

TRADE REPORTS, ANNUAL SERIES.—No. 3747. Abyssinia.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1166

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.—Annual report on the state of the finances of the University of Glasgow under the provisions of Section 30 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, for the year 1905–1906 1166

SUPERANNUATION (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS).—Treasury Minute, dated 5th March, 1907, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the offices of salaried official receiver in bankruptcy and inspector of official receivers, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required 1166

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANK AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).—Account of the gross amount of all sums received and paid by the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt on account of banks for saving and friendly societies in Great Britain and Ireland, from their commencement at 6th August, 1817, to 20th November, 1906, inclusive.

Account of the several transactions which have taken place during the year ended 20th November, 1906, in the investment of all moneys which came into the hands of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt for savings banks and friendly societies.

Statement showing the aggregate amount of the liabilities of the Government to the trustees of savings banks and friendly societies respectively on 20th November, 1906, etc.

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Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1167

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the following Lords be proposed to the House as the panel of Lords to act as Commissioners under the Act, viz. :—

V. Falkland.
L. Templemore.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly 1167

NEW BILLS.

Rule Committee Bill. [H.L.] (No. 11).—A Bill to amend the Judicature Acts, 1873 to 1894, with respect to the persons in whom the power of making rules of Court under those Acts is vested 1167

Matrimonial Causes Acts Amendment Bill. [H.L.] (No. 12).—A Bill to amend the Matrimonial Causes Acts, 1857 to 1866, by extending the powers of the Court in rleation to maintenance and alimony, and leave to intervene, and to amend the Evidence Further Amendment Act, 1869; and .. 1167

Prize Courts Bill. [H.L.[(No. 13).—A Bill for amending the law relating to the administration of oaths for the purpose of proceeding in Prize Courts.

Were presented by the LORD CHANCELLOR; read 1ª; and to be printed 1168

SUNDAY TRADING.

Lord Avebury 1168

Moved, "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to legislate in accordance with the unanimous Reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

Lord Zoucho of Haryngworth 1171
Lord Bishop of Wakefield 1173
Lord Montagu of Beaulieu 1177
The Duke of Northumberland 1178
Earl Beauchamp 1180
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 1184
Lord Weardale 1188
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1190
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1195
Lord Avebury 1197

On Question, resolved in the affirmative.

THE NORTH SEA

The Earl of Onslow 1199
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (*Earl Carrington*) 1201

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TRAWLING PROSECUTIONS.

Lord Heneage 1202
Lord Hamilton of Dalzell 1205

STANDING COMMITTEE.—Report from the Committee of Selection for the Standing Committee, that they have added the Earl of Chichester and the Lord Courtney of Penwith to the Standing Committee; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 1206

House adjourned at five minutes before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 11TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time to-morrow 1206

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.:—Marriages Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 1207

South Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 1207

Leith Harbour and Docks Bill.—"To authorise the Commissioners for the harbour and docks of Leith to vary the method of charging rates on steam vessels," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time 1207

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—Petition from Oatlands Colliery Railway Pits, Derbyshire, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1207

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—Petition from Central Hackney, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1207

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RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND).—Return [presented 8th March] to be printed. [No. 71] 1207

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 9th March, 1907, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1208

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (CODE 1907).—Copy presented, of Code of Regulations for Day Schools, 1907, with Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1208

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.—Copy presented, of Abstract of Accounts of the University of Glasgow for the year ending 30th September, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No 72.] 1208

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANK AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).—Annual Account presented, for the period ended 20th November, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 73] 1208

SUPERANNUATIONS.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 5th March, 1907, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the offices of Salaried Official Receiver in Bankruptcy and Inspector of Official Receivers, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1208

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).—Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 519 (East Africa Protectorate, Report for 1905–6) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1208

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3747 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1208

CHARITY COMMISSION (ENGLAND AND WALES).—Copy presented, of Fifty-fourth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1208

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (HALF-YEARLY STATEMENTS).—Copy ordered, " of Statement of the number of Paupers relieved on the 1st day of January, 1907, and similar Statement for the 1st day of July, 1907 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 272, of Session 1906)."—(*Dr. Macnamara.*) .. 1209

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

PROMOTION OF STAFF OFFICER IN THE BOARD OF WORKS, DUBLIN.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Runciman 1209

UNREGISTERED TRADE UNIONS AND PAYMENT OF INCOME TAX.—Question, Mr. Clynes (Manchester, N.E.); Answer, Mr. Asquith 1209

TENDERS FOR THE BELLAGHY-CASTLEDAWSON MAIL SERVICE.—Question, Mr. MacVeagh (Down, S.); Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 1210

ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES—BELTURBET POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Buxton 1210

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PENDING CHANGES IN METROPOLITAN TELEGRAPH WORK.—Question, Mr. Bowerman (Deptford); Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 1210

POSTMAN'S ROUNDS—CYCLE AND FOOT WORK.—Question, Mr. James O'Connor (Wicklow, W.); Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 1211

NAVY OFFICERS—COUNTING OF SERVICE.—Question, Mr. Bellairs (Lynn Regis); Answer, Mr. E. Robertson 1211

THE BEATTS PATENT TRENCHING TOOL.—Question, Mr. Wilkie (Dundee); Answer, Mr. Haldane 1211

THE ARMY REDUCTIONS.—Question, Mr. C. Salter (Hants, Basingstoke); Answer, Mr. Haldane 1212

COMMISSION CHARGED BY CROWN AGENTS.—Question, Mr. A. Taylor (Liverpool); Answer, Mr. Churchill 1212

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARMY—NUMBER OF OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. Godfrey Baring (Isle of Wight); Answer, Mr. Haldane 1213

ESTABLISHMENT OF REGULAR TROOPS.—Question, Mr. Godfrey Baring; Answer, Mr. Haldane 1213

ARMING OF SOUTHEND COMPANIES OF 1ST ESSEX ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.—Question, Mr. Whitehead (Essex, S.E.); Answer, Mr. Haldane 1214

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE AND TREATMENT OF INDIANS IN BRITISH COLONIES. Questions, Mr. Scott (Ashton-under-Lyne); Answers, Mr. Morley 1215

PRINTING OF TELEGRAPH FORMS IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, Mr. Runciman 1215

SALARIES OF ENGLISH AND IRISH COUNTY COURT JUDGES.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Runciman 1216

RECEIPTS OF THE NATIONAL PHYSICAL LABORATORY.—Question, Mr. O. C. Philipps (Pembroke and Haverfordwest); Answer, Mr. Runciman .. 1216

PROMOTIONS IN THE ACOUNTANT'S DEPARTMENT, BOARD OF WORKS, DUBLIN.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Runciman 1217

COMMISSIONS PAID BY THE CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONERS.—Question, Mr. Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyne); Answer, Mr. S. Wortley 1217

THE IRISH ORDNANCE SURVEY.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Sir E. Strachey 1218

THE BUTTER AND MARGARINE BILL—DATE OF SECOND READING.—Question, Mr. W. Hope (Somersetshire, N.); Answer, Sir E. Strachey 1219

CATTLE AND SHEEP LANDED AND KILLED AT DEPTFORD.—Question, Dr. Cooper (Southwark, Bermondsey); Answer, Sir E. Strachey 1219

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE.—Question, Dr. Cooper; Answer, Sir E. Strachey 1219

INSPECTION OF IMPORTED BONELESS MEAT.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. J. Burns 1220

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FEES AND EMOLUMENTS OF POOR LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. Haddock (Lancashire, North Lonsdale); Answer, Mr. J. Burns 1221

OVERCROWDING AND DISEASE IN BRENTFORD WORKHOUSE SCHOOL.—Question, Sir W. Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston); Answer, Mr. J. Burns 1221

ANNUAL REPORT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—SUGGESTED DIVISION.—Question, Mr. P. Pease (Darlington); Answer, Mr. J. Burns 1222

RAILWAY AND SHIPPING RATES.—Question, Mr. Field ; Answer, Mr. Lloyd-George 1222

THE LAW OF COPYRIGHT.—Question, Mr. Waterlow (Islington, N.); Answer, Mr. Lloyd-George 1222

PROGRESSIVE RATES OF PAY FOR STOKER PETTY OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. Bramsdon (Portsmouth); Answer, Mr. E. Robertson 1223

INCREASED PAY FOR LABOURERS AT ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL HASLAR.—Question, Colonel Harrison-Broadley; Answer, Mr. E. Robertson.. .. 1223

SURVEYING OF WEST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA.—Question, Mr. A. Williamson (Elgin and Nairn); Answer, Mr. E. Robertson 1224

THE MATCH INDUSTRY—POISONOUS AND NON-POISONOUS MATCHES.—Question, Sir C. Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answer, Mr. Gladstone 1224

CUTTING OF TREES IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.—Question, Mr. Murray Macdonald (Falkirk, Burghs); Answer, Mr. Harcourt 1225

ALLOTMENT OF ADDITIONAL GRANTS FOR TRAINING COLLEGES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Sir P. Magnus (London University); Answer, Mr. MacKenna 1225

THE HIGH BANK RATE—INTERNATIONAL GAMBLING OPERATIONS.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Asquith 1226

STAMP DUTIES ON TRANSFER OF FOREIGN SECURITIES.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Asquith 1227

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER OF BOWES PARK AND INCOME-TAX ASSESSMENT.—Question, Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.); Answer, Mr. Asquith.. .. 1228

REFUSAL OF PERMISSION TO PROSECUTE INDIAN JOURNAL.—Question, Sir H. Cotton (Nottingham, E.); Answer, Mr. Morley 1228

COMPLETION OF THE PURCHASE SCHEME FOR THE BRAMDON ESTATE, COUNTY CORK.—Question, Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1229

RIGHT OF CUTTING HEDGE ON THE LOGAN ESTATE, COUNTY MAYO.—Question, Dr. Ambrose (Mayo, W.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1229

IRISH CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1230

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IMPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AT HAMBURG.—Question, Mr. Remnant (Finsbury, Holborn); Answer, Mr. Lloyd-George 1255

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THE "PEOPLE'S FRIEND."—Question, Mr. Wilkie (Dundee), Mr. C. E. Price (Edinburgh, Central); Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 1259

POST OFFICE TELEPHONE WIRES.—Question, Mr. Rawlinson (Cambridge University); Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 1260

EDUCATION BILL GRANT OF 1906.—Question, Sir H. Norman (Wolverhampton, S.); Answer, The President of the Board of Education (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) 1260

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STAFF.—Question, Mr. S. Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall); Answer, Mr. McKenna 1261

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ELECTION EXPENDITURE.—Question, Mr. Crooks (Woolwich); Answer, The Attorney-General (Sir J. Walton, Leeds, S.) 1263

CLIFTON PARK AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENTS.—Question, Sir J. Jardine (Roxburghshire); Answer, Sir E. Strachey 1263

GOOSEBERRY CULTIVATION.—Question, Mr. Rowlands (Kent, Dartford); Answer, Sir Edward Strachey 1264

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TWEED FISHERY PROSECUTIONS.—Question, Sir J. Jardine; Answer, Mr. Sinclair 1267

LINE FISHING IN THE MORAY FIRTH.—Question, Mr. Annan Bryce (Inverness Burghs); Answer, Mr. Sinclair 1267

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ISLAND OF LEWIS—PUBLIC HEALTH.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Sinclair 1268

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HIGHLAND CROFTERS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Sinclair.. 1269

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POSTAL DELIVERIES NEAR THE ROSSLARE RAILWAY.—Question, Mr. Ffrench; Answer, Mr. Sydney Buxton 1269

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SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.—Question, Mr. Rogers (Wiltshire, Devizes); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1271

POLICE REPORTS TO IRISH JUDGES.—Questions, Mr. Hayden; Answers, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1271

CANADIAN WHEAT EXPORTS.—Questions, Mr. Remnant (Finsbury, Holborn); Answers, Mr. Lloyd-George 1272

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Question, Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1273

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—John Henry Whitley, esquire, for the Borough of Halifax 1274

NEW BILL.

Valuation (Ireland) Bill.—"To effect an equitable administration of any new general Valuation in Ireland," presented by Mr. James O'Connor; supported by Mr. Field, Mr. Ffrench, and Mr. O'Malley; to be read a second time upon Friday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 101] .. 1274

SUPPLY [3RD ALLOTTED DAY].—Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1907–8 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £21,410,000, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, viz.:—

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CIVIL SERVICES.

CLASS II.

	£
Colonial Office	25,000

CLASS IV.

Scientific Investigation, etc.	24,000
Board of Education	7,000,000

CLASS I.

Royal Palaces	20,000
Osborne	5,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens	50,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings	20,000
Salisbury Memorial	—
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Great Britain	30,000
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain	25,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings	50,000
Revenue Buildings	210,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain	200,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom	90,000
Harbours under the Board of Trade	15,000
Peterhead Harbour	10,000
Rates on Government Property	290,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland	95,000
Railways, Ireland	35,000

CLASS II.

United Kingdom and England :—

House of Lords Offices	10,000
House of Commons Offices	20,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments	40,000
Home Office	70,000
Foreign Office	24,000
Privy Council Office	5,000
Board of Trade	90,000
Mercantile Marine Services	32,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	500
Board of Agriculture and Fisheries	60,000
Charity Commission	15,000
Civil Service Commission	17,000
Exchequer and Audit Department	25,000
Friendly Societies Registry	3,000
Local Government Board	85,000
Lunacy Commission	5,000
Mint (including Coinage)	5
National Debt Office	6,000
Public Record Office	10,000
Public Works Loan Commission	500
Registrar General's Office	15,000
Stationery and Printing	330,000

	£
Woods, Forests, etc., Office of	8,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	34,000
Secret Service	40,000

Scotland :—

Secretary for Scotland, Office of	25,000
Fishery Board	5,000
Lunacy Commission	2,500
Registrar General's Office	1,500
Local Government Board	5,000

Ireland :—

Lord-Lieutenant's Household	2,000
Chief Secretary's Offices and Subordinate Departments	10,000
Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction	90,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office	1,000
Local Government Board	30,000
Public Record Office	2,000
Public Works Office	16,000
Registrar General's Office	5,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey	7,000

Class III.

United Kingdom and England :—

Law Charges	30,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses	28,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	140,000
Land Registry	16,000
County Courts	2
Police, England and Wales	15,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies	320,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain	130,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	12,000

Scotland :—

Law Charges and Courts of Law	30,000
Register House, Edinburgh	15,000
Crofters Commission	2,000
Prisons	35,000

Ireland :—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	25,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments	43,000
Land Commission	100,000
County Court Officers, etc.	45,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police	60,000
Royal Irish Constabulary	600,000
Prisons	52,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	55,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	4,000

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CLASS IV.

United Kingdom and England :—

British Museum	60,000
National Gallery	10,000
National Portrait Gallery	3,000
Wallace Collection	3,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	60,000

Scotland :—

Public Education	850,000
National Galleries	3,000

Ireland :—

Public Education	760,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners	400
National Gallery	2,000
Queen's Colleges	2,500

CLASS V.

Diplomatic and Consular Services	250,000
Colonial Services	350,000
Telegraph Subsidies and Pacific Cable	25,000
Cyprus (Grant-in-Aid)	49,000

CLASS VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	300,000
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances	1,150
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland	17,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiencies	—

CLASS VII.

Temporary Commissions	28,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	7,943
Repayment to the Local Loans Fund	—
Ireland Development Grant	100,000
Total for Civil Services	£13,980,000

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Customs	350,000
Inland Revenue	830,000
Post Office	6,250,000
Total for Revenue Departments	£7,430,000
Grand Total	£21,410,000

Mr. Lyttelton (*St. George's, Hanover Square*) 1278
The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (*Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.*) 1289
Mr. Bonar Law (*Camberwell, Dulwich*) 1304
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick*) 1309
Sir Gilbert Parker (*Gravesend*) 1317

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item, Class II., Vote 6 (Colonial Office), be reduced by £1,000."—(*Sir Gilbert Parker.*)

Major Seely (*Liverpool, Abercromby*) 1324
Mr. F. E. Smith (*Liverpool, Walton*) 1327
Mr. Soares (*Devonshire, Barnstaple*) 1332
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 1334
Mr. Molteno (*Dumfriesshire*) 1340
Mr. J. Ward (*Stoke-on-Trent*) 1347
Mr. Alden (*Middlesex, Tottenham*) 1350
Mr. Jesse Collings (*Birmingham, Bordesley*) 1354
Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 1360
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*), *Stirling Burghs* 1367

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 107; Noes, 283. (Division List No. 39.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Adjourned at sixteen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 12TH MARCH, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with . Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways [H.L.]

The same was ordered to lie on the Table 1377

Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The order made on the 28th of February last discharged, and Bill committed for Tuesday next 1377

West Riding Tramways Bill [H.L].—Reported, without Amendment 1377

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Royal Insurance Company Bill BILL [H.L.]; Medway Lower Navigation Bill [H.L.]; West Yorkshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Folkestone, Sandgate, and Hythe Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 1377

Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]—The consent of the Prince of Wales signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments 1377

Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1377

Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.].—Report of the Board of Trade on the Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]. Ordered to be laid before the House.—(The Lord Granard (*E. Granard*). 1377

Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.].—Report respecting. Laid before the House (pursuant to Order of this day), and to be printed. (No. 14.) 1377

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AUSTRALIA.—Report of the Royal Commission on Old-age Pension 1377

CHARITY COMMISSION.—Fifty-Fourth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales 1378

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Regulations for the preliminary education, training, and certification of teachers for various grades of schools, 1907.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1378

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES FUND (IRELAND) (NON-CONGESTED DISTRICTS).—Account for the year ended 31st December, 1906. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1378

TRAWLING IN THE MORAY FIRTH.

The Earl of Onslow 1378
Lord Hamilton of Dalziel 1378
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1379
Lord Heneage 1381
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 1382

House adjourned at ten minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 12TH MARCH, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.—New Writ for the County of Northumberland (Hexham Division) in the room of the Hon. Wentworth Canning Blackett Beaumont, now Baron Allendale, called up to the House of Peers.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*) .. 1384

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz.:—Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 1384

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 63 has been complied with, viz. :—Boston Spa Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 1385

Gray's and Tilbury Gas Bill.—Read a second time, and committed .. 1385

DIVORCE BILLS.—Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Cave, Sir David Brynmor Jones, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Joseph Leese, The Lord Advocate, and Mr. Solicitor-General were nominated Members of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill; Marriages Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed. 1385

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).—Ordered, that Zachariah Hornby do attend the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills on Thursday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock 1385

STANDING ORDERS.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.

"That,,in the case of the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements), Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed wth their Bill, on the condition that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 1A, 2, 2A, 2B, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 9A are struck out of the Bill :—That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill on the condition that the following Amendments be made in Clause 6 of the Bill, namely—

(*a*) The omission of the words "at their own cost," in the second line of the Clause ;

(*b*) The omission of so much of the Clause as requires that the works shall be carried out under the superintendence and to the reasonable satisfaction of the engineer of the promoters, and provides for the determination of differences between the said engineer and the corporation by arbitration ; and

(*c*) The omission of Sub Clause (2) of the Clause relating to the payment by the corporation of liquidated damages.

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That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the Channel Tunnel Railway Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the condition that all reference to the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company is struck out of Clauses 57, 58, and 59 of the Bill :—That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'Lord Edmund Talbot and others, the Trustees of Providence (Row) Night Refuge and Home,' the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with" 1386

Resolutions agreed to.

Channel Tunnel Railway Bill.—Report [this day] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read ;
Bill ordered to be read a second time 1387

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—Petitions in favour ; from Bradford ; Chickerley Heath ; Heage ; Manvers (No. 2) Branch ; and New Moss Collieries ; to lie upon the Table 1387

EAST INDIA AND CHINA (OPIUM TRADE).—Petitions for suppression ; from Dunoon ; and, Wilmslow ; to lie upon the Table 1387

Petition from Egginton, for alteration of Law ; to lie upon the Table 1387

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Dunoon, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 1387

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—Petition from Morpeth, against ; to lie upon the Table 1387

MONASTIC AND CONVENTUAL INSTITUTIONS.—Petition from Dunoon, for Government inspection ; to lie upon the Table 1387

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (METRIC SYSTEM) BILL.—Petition from Reading, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 1387

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—Petition from Gloucester, in favour ; to lie upon the Table 1387

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES FUND (IRELAND) (NON-CONGESTED DISTRICTS).—Account presented for the year ended 31st December, 1906 [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table 1388

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UGANDA RAILWAY ACTS, 1896 AND 1902.—Account presented, showing the money issued from the Consolidated Fund under the provisions of the Uganda Railway Acts, 1896 (59 and 60 Vic., c. 38), and 1902 (2 Edw. 7, c. 40), and of the money expended and borrowed, and securities created under the said Acts, to 31st March, 1906, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 74.] 1388

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Regulations for the preliminary education, training, and certification of teachers for various grades of schools [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1388

AUSTRALIA.—Copy presented, of Report of the Royal Commission on Old-age Pensions [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1388

ALIENS (NATURALISATION).—Return presented, relative thereto [Address, 28th February; *Mr. Herbert Samuel*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 75.] 1388

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.—Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Newport (Isle of Wight), and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of shops within the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1388

BOARD OF EDUCATION.—Copy presented, of Judgments of the Divisional Court, Court of Appeal, and House of Lords in the case of the King *v.* the County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1388

TREATY SERIES (No. 9, 1907).—Copy presented, of Agreement between the United Kingdom and Switzerland, respecting Commercial Travellers' Samples, signed at Berne, 20th February, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table .. 1389

DEATHS FROM STARVATION OR ACCELERATED BY PRIVATION (LONDON).—Address for "Return of the number of Deaths in the administrative county of London in the year 1906, upon which a coroner's jury has returned a verdict of Death from Starvation or Death accelerated by Privation; together with any observations furnished to the Local Government Board by boards of guardians with reference to cases included in the Return (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 304, of Session 1906)."—(*Mr. Talbot*) 1389

FOREIGN TRADE AND COMMERCE.—Return ordered, "of Monthly Accounts relating to the Trade and Commerce of certain Foreign Countries and British Possessions."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*) 1389

POST OFFICE (LIVERPOOL AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).—Order [6th March] for a Return relative thereto, and Orders [6th March] that the said Return do lie upon the Table and be printed, read, and discharged; and, instead thereof—

POST OFFICE (LIVERPOOL AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).—Copy ordered, "of the Contract, dated the 2nd day of February, 1907, with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the conveyance of the Mails between Liverpool and Hong Kong, for the period from the 7th day of April, 1906, to the 6th day of April, 1908, together with a copy of the Treasury Minute thereon, dated the 27th day of February, 1907."—(*Mr. Runciman.*)

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Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 76.] 1389

ARMY (RECURRENT EXPENDITURE).—Address for "Return showing approximately the Recurrent Army Expenditure provided for in the current Estimates (1907–8), classified (with due proportionate charges for administration, pension, transport, etc.) under the following heads and sub-heads—

(1) Mobile defence—

(*a*) Troops Abroad (exclusive of India) available for field service.

(*b*) Troops at Home available for field service at Home or Abroad.

(*c*) Troops at Home available for field service at Home only.

(2) Fixed garrisons—

(*d*) Abroad (naval bases and coaling stations).

(*e*) Naval ports at Home.

(*f*) Commercial ports at Home, including Woolwich and London.

(3) The annual interest on the Expenditure under the Military Works Loans Acts:—

(*g*) Fixed defences and their garrisons.

(*h*) Field Army.

(4) The establishments on which the tables are based.

To be accompanied by an explanatory Memorandum."—(*Mr. Bellairs*) 1390

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

GRANT FOR FISHING PIER AT BALLAGHALEM, COUNTY CLARE.—Question, Mr. Halpin (Clare, W.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1390

FIXING OF SECOND-TERM RENTS IN COUNTY CORK.—Question, Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1390

DUBLIN SCHOOL OF ART—APPOINTMENT OF HEAD MASTER AND HEAD MISTRESS.—Question, Mr. Gwynn (Galway); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1391

AGRARIAN CRIME IN COUNTY CLARE.—Question, Captain Craig (Down, E.) and Mr. S. Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1392

IRISH EVICTED TENANTS—CASE OF MARY MORAN.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1393

RELEASE OF McCANN.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Birrell .. 1393

PAYMENT OF RATES BY LANDLORDS OF TENEMENTS UNDER £5 VALUATION.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1394

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POSITION OF MR. E. MITCHELL.—Question, Mr. Moore (Armagh, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1394

DISTURBANCES IN COUTY ROSCOMMON.—Question, Mr. C. Craig (Antrim, S.), and Mr. Hayden; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1395

CRIME IN COUNTIES CLARE AND LEITRIM.—Question, Mr. C. Craig; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1396

DRAINAGE OF THE SCARIFF RIVER, COUNTY CLARE.—Question, Mr. W. Redmond (Clare, E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1396

SALE OF THE NAGLE ESTATE, COUNTY CLARE.—Question, Mr. W. Redmond; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1396

UNECONOMIC HOLDINGS ON THE WILLS SANDFORD ESTATE.—Question, Mr. Hayden (Roscommon, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1397

SALE OF THE NELIGAN ESTATE, COUNTY CORK.—Question, Mr. Crean (Cork, S.E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1397

IRISH EVICTED TENANTS—CASE OF MRS. ELLIN O'SHAUGHNESSY.—Question, Mr. Crean; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1398

ANNUAL REPORT OF IRISH EDUCATION.—Question, Mr. Murphy (Kerry, E.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1399

GRANT OF LAND TO GRAZIER AT LISS.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1399

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EMIGRANTS FROM IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Long (Dublin, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1402

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OUTDOOR RELIEF FOR DESERVING AGED POOR.—Question, Mr. Bennett; Answer, Mr. J. Burns 1404

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WORKING OF THE IRISH LAND ACT.—Question, Mr. Ginnell (Westmeath, N.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1405

SALE OF LAND IN COUNTY WESTMEATH.—Question, Mr. Ginnell; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1405

THE O'DWYER ESTATE.—Question, Mr. Ginnell; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1406

PERSONS ENGAGED IN RENT FIXING, VALUATING AND INSPECTION OF IRISH LAND.—Question, Mr. Ginnell; Answer, Mr. Birrell.. 1406

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IRISH EVICTED TENANTS—CASE OF JAMES MOONEY.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1408

THE CLIFFORD ESTATE, COUNTY KILKENNY.—Question, Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S,); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1408

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VOLUNTEER RIFLE RANGES.—Question, Mr. Mond; Answer, Mr. Haldane .. 1413

PERIOD OF ENLISTMENT.—Question, Major Renton (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough); Answer, Mr. Haldane 1413

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UNITED STATES AHD MOST-FAVOURED-NATION TREATMENT.—Question, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.); Answer, Sir E. Grey 1417

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EXECUTION OF A BRITISH SUBJECT AT WARSAW.—Question, Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley), Mr. J. Ward (Stoke-on-Trent), Sir G. Parker (Gravesend), Major Anstruther-Gray (St. Andrews Burghs); Answers, Sir E. Grey .. 1418

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FENCE HOUSES MAIL CART DRIVERS' HOURS OF DUTY.—Question, Mr. Summerbell; Answer, Mr. S. Buxton 1424

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SCOTTISH UNEMPLOYED GRANT.—Question, Mr. Morton (Sutherland); Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 1435

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PERTH PRISON—WARDER'S DUTIES.—Question, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson; Answer, Mr. Sinclair.. 1435

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GOLDING ESTATE, COUNTY GALWAY.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, S.); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1439

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LAUDER ESTATE, KING'S COUNTY.—Question, Mr. Reddy (King's County, Birmingham); Answer, Mr. Birrell 1441

MAJOR URQUHART'S KING'S COUNTY ESTATE.—Question, Mr. Reddy; Answer, Mr. Birrell 1441

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.—Question, Mr. Bottomley (Hackney, S.); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1444

HAMBURG DOCK STRIKE.—Question, Mr. Thorne (West Ham, S.), Mr. H. Wilson (Middlesbrough); Answer, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1444

PERSONAL STATEMENT.—

Mr. H. H. Marks (*Kent, Thanet*) 1446

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London), Mr. Moore, and Colonel Lockwood (Essex, Epping); Answers, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1447

Shops (No. 2) Bill.—Order for Second Reading upon Friday, 3rd May, read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 1451

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures: Mr. Charles Nicholson, Mr. Manfield, and Mr. Crombie; and had appointed in substitution: Dr. Pollard, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. James Murray.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping and Manufactures, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Education Acts Amendment Bill: Mr. Walter Rea, Mr. Frederick Edwin Smith, Mr. Masterman, Mr. Parker, Mr. Rees, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Lough, Mr. Leif Jones, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Talbot, Sir Berkeley Sheffield, Mr. Butcher, Mr. Ellis Davies, Mr. Richardson, and Sir Edwin Cornwall.

Reports to lie upon the Table 1451

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).—

Motion made and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion when the Business is postponed this day, be resumed and proceeded with, though opposed, after the interruption of Business."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 318; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 40) .. 1452

SUPPLY [26TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate [6th March] on Amendment to Second Resolution, " That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries."

Which Amendment was—

" To leave out ' £10,000,' and insert ' £9,000.' "—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Question again proposed, " That ' £10,000 ' stand part of the said Resolution."

Lord Robert Cecil (Marylebone, E.) .. 1455
Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) .. 1457
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, W.) .. 1459
Mr. J. Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) .. 1461
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) .. 1462
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) .. 1463
Mr. George Faber (York) .. 1463
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) .. 1464
Mr. Ellis Davies (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) .. 1466
Mr. Stanley Wilson (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) .. 1467
Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend) .. 1467
Mr. Brace (Glamorganshire, S.) .. 1469
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) .. 1470
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs) .. 1472
Mr. Lyttelton (St. George's, Hanover Square) .. 1475
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) .. 1476
Mr. William Abraham (Glamorganshire, Rhondda) .. 1476
Mr. Morton (Sutherland) .. 1477
Mr. Moore (Armagh, W.) .. 1478
Sir Alfred Thomas (Glamorganshire, E.) .. 1480
Captain Craig (Down, E.) .. 1480
The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) .. 1483
Mr. Hugh Law (Donegal, W.) .. 1484
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury) .. 1484
Mr. Akers Douglas (Kent, St. Augustine's) .. 1486

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

" To leave out ' £10,000,' and insert ' £9,900.' "—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question put, " That ' £10,000 ' stand part of the said Resolution."

The House divided :—Ayes, 331 ; Noes, 81. (Division List No. 41.)

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [21ST FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1906–7.

CLASS I.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,900, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for Houses of Parliament Buildings."

CLASS II.

3. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,550, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and Expenses in the Offices of the House of Commons."

4. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £255, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Offices of the Chief Secretary in Dublin and London, and Expenses under the Inebriates Acts."

CLASS III.

5. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for such of the Salaries and Expenses of the Supreme Court of Judicature as are not charged on the Consolidated Fund."

6. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £140, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Establishment of the Crofters' Commission."

CLASS IV.

7. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for Grants towards the Expenditure of certain School Boards in Scotland."

First Resolution read a second time.

Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) 1493
Sir F. Banbury 1493

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£2,300,' and insert '£2,200.'"—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That '£2,300' stand part of the said Resolution."

The First Commissioner of Works (*Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale*) 1493

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Sir F. Banbury 1494
Mr. Lupton (*Lincolnshire, Sleaford*) 1495
Colonel Lockwood (*Essex, Epping*) 1495
Mr. Harcourt 1496

Resolution agreed to.

Third Resolution read a second time.

Mr. Claude Hay 1497
Mr. Runciman 1497
Mr. Victor Cavendish (*Derbyshire, W.*) 1498

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution read a second time.

Sir F. Banbury 1498

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£255,' and insert '£55.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That '£255' stand part of the said Resolution."

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.*) 1499
Mr. Bridgeman (*Shropshire, Oswestry*) 0501
Mr. Markham (*Nottinghamshire, Mansfield*) 1501
Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 1502
Mr. Leif Jones (*Westmorland, Appleby*) 1502
Mr. Nield (*Middlesex, Ealing*) 1503

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Subsequent Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [6TH MARCH] REPORT.

Resolution reported.

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ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATE, 1906-7.

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army services, viz.:—

	£
Vote 5. Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowances, etc.	439,000
Vote 12. Miscellaneous Effective Services	20,000
	459,000
Less Surpluses on other Votes	458,900
	100"

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Sir F. Banbury 1504
Mr. George Faber 1506
Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 1506

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, further proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

MARINE WORKS IN IRELAND.

Mr. Mooney (Newry) 1507
Mr. Ffrench (Wexford, S.) 1512

Motion made and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the sea fisheries of Ireland stand in urgent need of development with a view to the employment of the people, and to stem the tide of emigration; and that the proper development of these fisheries and the subsidiary industries dependent upon them can only be attained by the speedy passing of a Marine Works Act similar to the Act already passed (but largely in abeyance) in connection with the congested districts, but modified to suit the circumstances of the other parts of the country."—(*Mr. Mooney.*)

Mr. Moore (Armagh, N.) 1517
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 1520
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 1522
Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.) 1524
Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.) 1526
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.) 1527
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 1534
Mr. Power (Waterford, E.) 1537
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 1538

And, it being Eleven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.]

SUPPLY [6TH MARCH] REPORT.

Postponed Proceeding on Question, " That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, ' That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army services, viz. :—

		£
Vote 5.	Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowances, etc. - -	439,000
Vote 12.	Miscellaneous Effective Services - - - -	20,000
		459,000
	Less Surpluses on other Votes - - - -	458,900
		100 ' "

The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Haldane, Haddington*) 1539
Mr. Rawlinson (*Cambridge University*) 1540
Mr. Bowles (*Lambeth, Norwood*) 1541
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury*) .. 1542
Mr. Victor Cavendish 1544
Mr. Leif Jones (*Westmoreland, Appleby*) 1545
Mr. Walter Long 1546

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 208 ; Noes, 51. (Division List No. 42.)

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, the sum of £71,715 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, " That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, the sum of £38,114,700 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow. Committee to sit again to-morrow 1551

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday evening, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET
THE TWELFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY IN THE SEVENTH YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1907.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by a Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 27th February, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.]. Witnesses ordered to attend on the Second Reading.

Borax Consolidated Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed.

Manchester Ship Canal (Bridgewater Canal) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Metropolitan Railway (Pension Fund) Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed.

Royal Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Staveley Coal and Iron Company Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed.

Medway Lower Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]; Southend Water Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

West Riding Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Wisbech Water Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}, and committed.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES (MISCELLANEOUS).

No. 40. Northern Nigeria. Memorandum on the taxation of natives in Northern Nigeria, by Sir F. Lugard, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., late High Commissioner.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 3746. Denmark (Trade and Shipping for 1905 (Supplementary).

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1906).

Vol. XLI., Part II. Return of produce of crops in Great Britain, with summaries for the United Kingdom.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (PHOSPHOROUS POISONING AT MESSRS. MORELAND'S MATCH FACTORY, GLOUCESTER).

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by H. H. S. Cunynghame, Esq., C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State and B. A. Whitelegge, Esq., C.B., M.D., His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Factories, on the circumstances attending a fatal case of phosphorous poisoning at the match factory of Messrs. Moreland & Co., Gloucester.

ARTERIAL DRAINAGE (IRELAND).

Report of the Vice-regal Arterial Drainage Commission (Ireland), 1905.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

CHURCH TEMPORALITIES (IRELAND).

Accounts of the Irish Land Commission in respect of Church Temporalities in Ireland, for the year ended 31st March, 1906, and from 26th July, 1869 (the date of the Irish Church Act) to 31st March, 1906; together with the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS, 1853-1891 (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Licence granted by His Majesty to Jenny Lang, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the Home of St. John the Baptist, London, S.W.

UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND ACT, 1889.

Annual report of the state of the finances of the University of Edinburgh under the provision of Section 30 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, for the year 1905–1906.

Annual statistical report by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh to the Secretary for Scotland under the provisions of Section 30 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, for the year 1905–1906.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BRIDLINGTON PIERS AND HARBOUR.

Abstract of annual general account for the year ended 26th July, 1906: Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to authorise the introduction of proportional representation in municipal elections; and for other purposes—Was presented by the Lord Courtney of Penwith; read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Tuesday the 12th of March next. (No. 8).

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:—

E. Crewe.
(*L. President.*)
D. Bedford.
D. Marlborough.
D. Northumberland.
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
E. Derby.
E. Denbigh.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Jersey.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Cadogan.
E. Howe.
E. Amherst.
E. Camperdown.
E. Dartrey.
E. Lytton.
E. Carrington.
V. Sidmouth.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Barnard.
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Poltimore.
L. Kintore.
(*E. Kintore.*)
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Kinnaird.
L. Hylton.
L. Fermanagh.
(*E. Erne.*)
L. Herries.
L. Monkswell.
L. Newton.
L. Welby.
L. Ludlow.

All petitions relating to the Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present session referred to the Committee unless otherwise ordered.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Select Committee appointed: The Lords following, with the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, and the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:—

D. Northumberland.
M. Bath.
M. Cholmondeley.
M. Breadalbane.
E. Liverpool.
(*L. Steward.*)
E. Clarendon.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Spencer.
E. Mount Edgcumbe.
E. Belmore.
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
E. Ancaster.
E. Carrington.
E. Halsbury.
E. Plymouth.
V. Gordon.
(*E. Aberdeen.*)
V. Cross.
V. Peel.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
V. Selby.
L. Balfour
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Rosebery.
(*E. Rosebery.*)
L. Kintore.
(*E. Kintore.*)
L. Belper.
L. Tweedmouth.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Welby.
L. Burghclere.
L. Colebroke.

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THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC IN WEST AFRICA.

*THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I rise to call attention to the subject of the importation and sale of intoxicating liquor in West Africa, especially in Lagos and Nigeria; and to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies for further information on the subject.

Less than two years have passed since I had the honour of calling the attention of your Lordships to this matter,† and it might seem unnecessary to raise the question again but for one or two considerations. First of all, I regard this as no local or merely financial or technical matter, but as one involving the very largest principles which govern the relation we bear to the native races in different parts of the world with whom we are brought into direct contact; and it is impossible, in my view, and herein I am supported by the best authorities, to exaggerate, in connection with that relationship, the importance of this particular point. But there are other reasons why what I said a year and a half ago requires to be restated, or the subject reintroduced, now. I was then answered, on behalf of the Colonial Office, by the Duke of Marlborough, and I think any of your Lordships who refer to what was said on that occasion will see that the noble Duke, referring to the points I had brought forward, stated that there were some of them requiring further inquiry, and he promised that they should be looked into. I think that when looked into it will be found that some of the supposed facts which the noble Duke then stated to the House were based on wrong information.

Since the time when this matter was last before your Lordships a Convention has been held at Brussels in accordance with the promise of the noble Marquess the present Leader of the Opposition. It was held in the autumn of 1906, and I desire to have a little further information as to the result of the consideration there given to this particular subject. Most of all, my Lords, the matter is, to my mind, important because of the very prosaic but vital fact that the railway is weekly or monthly advancing and bringing with it fresh difficulties which we have hitherto not been called upon to face.

May I for a moment remind your Lordships of the geographical situation of the countries I am referring to? In the strip of the coast of West Africa which runs from east to west there is along the sea-line the Colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Behind is a hinterland cut off entirely from the sea, comprising the very much larger Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, the population of which is roughly estimated at about 10,000,000 of people as against 6,000,000 in the southern region; and the matter which is now, to my mind, most pressingly urgent for consideration relates to the Northern Nigerian territory with that immense population. As regards the laws prevalent on this subject now, in Southern Nigeria there is a restriction upon the sale of liquor by means of a tariff, and in the Colony of Lagos by means of heavy licences. In Northern Nigeria, the great region that lies away from the sea, where the people are far less in contact with European life and trade, there is as yet total prohibition of the sale of liquor in any form, and it is in consequence of the danger lest we now interfere with that prohibition—it is for that reason that I want specially to again call your Lordships' attention to the matter.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxlvii., 826 *et seq.*

It is almost unnecessary to multiply quotations to show what has been felt by those best qualified to judge as to the peril involved to the native races from the introduction of that liquor for whose introduction we are, in large part, if not wholly, responsible in the regions which are directly under our control. Mr. Chamberlain, who identified himself many years ago with this movement and has spoken again and again on the question, used these words when Colonial Secretary in 1889, in answer to a deputation—

> "I do not think I am a fanatic, and no one, I hope, has called me a sentimentalist, and I am certainly not a teetotaler. I hope I am not extreme with regard to any subject; but I hold, as a matter of deep conviction, that the liquor trade, and above all, the increase of the liquor traffic in West Africa amongst the native races, is not only discreditable to the British name, not only derogatory to that true Imperialism—the sentiment which I desire to inculcate in all my countrymen—but it is also disastrous to British trade."

That was in complete correspondence with what was said by a former Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who in 1888, in reply to a deputation, made this statement—

> "I need not inform you that I am not a temperance enthusiast myself. I do not coincide with many of the views which I hear urged with great confidence in this country. But the controversy here and the controversy with respect to the native races have nothing in common. The native races are for all practical purposes children, and so far as we can do it, like children they must be protected. No one who even looks at history, still less at contemporary history, can doubt the extreme character of the evil which this unrestricted traffic causes. It has before this swept whole races away; it is now producing the greatest havoc in all parts of the world. We are so deeply convinced of that, that any efforts on our part would never be wanting, nor would our attention for a moment relax, for the purpose of inducing that common effort by which alone this miserable traffic can be restrained."

Among those who on the spot have gained the widest experience would certainly be placed Sir George Goldie and Sir Frederick Cardew. Sir George Goldie was formerly President of the Royal Niger Company, and really administered Northern Nigeria before it was taken over by the British Government; and Sir Frederick Cardew was Governor of Sierra Leone. Sir George Goldie said—

> "I speak from sixteen years experience.... and I say confidently that unless immediate steps are taken to stop this traffic—not by higher duties, but by absolute prohibition—

I am not asking for that, but am quoting his words—

> "a state of things will soon be brought about that must ultimately lead to the entire abandonment of the country.... I cannot believe that the conscience of Europe will long allow that the vast populous regions of tropical Africa should be used only as a cesspool of European alcohol."

Sir Frederick Cardew said, in a speech at the Royal Colonial Institute that—

> "As to the liquor traffic I can fully endorse all that the lecturer has said, so far as my knowledge goes.... I feel convinced that if you would take away from the natives the liquor, other wants would be created, and they would purchase other articles which would be far more remunerative to the British merchant."

I quote these extracts to show that I am not speaking on behalf of fanatical or narrow enthusiasts, but am backed by the opinions of the men best qualified to speak on the whole subject.

The difficulty lies in this, that undoubtedly this liquor traffic is one of the most profitable modes of increasing the revenue of these somewhat striving and struggling Colonies and Protectorates, and to expect that those in official position will readily confess that it ought to be to a very large extent restricted or put down—above all, that while holding office and more or less responsible for the revenue, they will confess that—is expecting a great deal of human nature. When I last spoke I pointed to the indisputable fact that there had been a very great increase in the consumption of liquor imported from Europe into Southern Nigeria, and to the huge peril arising as the railway and other means of communication were approaching the frontier of Northern Nigeria. The Duke of Marlborough, in answering me, denied that there was great drinking in Southern Nigeria, and quoted certain statements or statistics in support of that view and of the assertion that the number of drunken people seen was small. I hold that in this particular matter it is not satisfactory to place excessive reliance, without further inquiry, on the personal observation of high officials. It is most natural that one occupying a high official position in the Government of a Colony or Protectorate will be able to say, "I do not see any people drunk." The Home Secretary here would very likely be able to say that he has seen very little drunkenness in London, but in that matter you would not rely on the personal observation of a Secretary of State, though that is practically the kind of testimony we have had on the part of Governors and others.

I appeal to other testimony difficult to formulate in statistics, but easily obtainable from a large number of people now in England who are familiar with the territories in question, and I have no hesitation in saying that the evidence is ample that whole villages and even districts are deteriorating month by month in consequence of the importation of liquor. As to the increase in Southern Nigeria, I do not think it can be disputed. The drinking is going on in the compounds rather than in public. The consumption is very great and the results are I fear indisputable. The evil exists, and it justifies our persistence in a policy of absolute prohibition with regard to Northern Nigeria. The prohibition rules which are in force there will very soon, I fear, become practically impossible of application. When I spoke before, the railway was still, as we were reminded by the Government spokesman, a long way off the frontier. It is now close to the frontier, and the survey for it has been completed right across the frontier. In a short time the railway will be carrying goods right into the region of the prohibited area.

I do not suppose that the Government will allow liquor to be carried by the railway across the frontier, but it will be carried in great quantities up to the very border of that territory, and, once there, arrangements will be made for storage with a view to its being taken across the frontier into Northern Nigeria. That point calls for the immediate attention of the Government, for I fail to find anything in the official Papers to show that the authorities are cognisant of the gravity of the matter. I mentioned last year that the extension of the liquor traffic was shown by the fact that at certain railway stations iron sheds had been erected for its storage. At stations I could name these sheds are built and being filled with goods, and there is reason to suspect that when the railway reaches the frontier liquor will be accumulated there in that way.

After this matter came up in the House two years ago there was some correspondence between the society which interests itself in the matter and Mr. Lyttelton, the then Colonial Secretary who wrote that a despatch had been addressed to the Belgian Government, in which Lord Lansdowne stated that the points to which His Majesty's Government wished to call the attention of the Conference were (*a*) increase of duty, (*b*) carriage of liquor on the railway, and (*c*) importation of spirits injurious to health. I have before me an account of what took place at the Conference, but I cannot find a word in it about carriage by railway; and I want to ask the noble Earl whether the intention that that subject should be discussed was persevered in, and what was the outcome if it was discussed.

It is a mistake to say, as was said on the last occasion on behalf of the Government, that the railway will not necessarily carry the liquor, because it is in many regions cheaper to take it up by road. I reassert absolutely, on the testimony of those on the spot, that it is inaccurate to say that liquor can be carried for any long distance by road anything like as cheaply as by rail. It is the rail-borne liquor which does the mischief. Practically none of it is taken by road, but all by railway, for the very obvious reason that it is much more economical.

There is a point of curious interest showing, as so many of these things do, the complexity which attends the advance of civilisation in these regions. A little while ago it used to be said that it was not easy to smuggle liquor from Southern Nigeria into Northern Nigeria, because the country was so unsafe that parties carrying liquor must follow certain roads; but in the last Report on Northern Nigeria it is stated that the security of the roads now enables travellers to travel singly through unfrequented parts and so avoid the toll stations. Thus even the security afforded by our civilisation is adding to the difficulty. I do not say that with a view of deprecating the peace and security of the country, but it is a fact that must be looked at.

Either it is right to have prohibition in Northern Nigeria or it is not. If it is right, it must be because the liquor is injurious to those to whom it comes.

Therefore to say that it is doing no harm in Southern Nigeria—a statement which I dispute—seems to me to carry with it the obligation to remove the prohibition from this other region. If, on the other hand, as I believe, it is universally agreed that prohibition ought to be maintained, that agreement must be based on the argument that the liquor is harmful to the natives; and if it is harmful, we ought first to restrict its sale in Southern Nigeria, and then to take care not to facilitate its being carried across the frontier into Northern Nigeria by making its transport easy.

I can imagine it being said—These statements are all very well; what would you have us do? There are three modes in which it is possible to act restrictively with regard to the traffic in liquor. First of all, by an enhanced duty. There has been a trifling advance in the duty since the late convention, and I cannot understand what prevents us from to some extent acting up to our own theory as to what ought to be done, even if France and Germany on either side of us do not do it. It seems to me that we should hurt nobody but ourselves if we raised the import duty, while it would be a very great gain to the inhabitants of these regions. Then as to railway restrictions, I have tried to point out that we are now in a far more perilous position on the railway as regards Northern Nigeria than we were a little while ago, and that if the railway is used for this purpose it will be fraught with immense mischief.

Then there is the point, why should there not be, even in Southern Nigeria, some insistence on the procuring of a licence for the sale of liquor? I am told that not a few of the traders in Southern Nigeria itself are anxious, finding the mischief that is done to other trades, that a licence should be absolutely required, and I would like to know whether the noble Earl can tell the House anything on that subject. I have no desire to exaggerate this matter or to make the evil out greater than it is, but I repeat that it is not a trifling or local or merely financial question. It involves a large and fundamental principle. The whole question of our relations to native races calls for our closest attention both in South Africa, in West Africa, and in other regions in which we come into touch with these childlike races, and I greatly deprecate the terrible prospect that we may be doing something that will add to the dark story of our relations with the natives of Western Africa.

The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ELGIN): My Lords, I am sure the most rev. Primate will agree that we who sit on this side of the House would naturally be as anxious as our predecessors in office to do all that we could to regulate the traffic in spirits and to promote thereby the well-being of the native races under our charge. I do not wish in any way to treat this as a matter of Party politics, and I accept absolutely the statements which the most rev. Primate has quoted from Mr. Chamberlain and the late Lord Salisbury as to the policy which His Majesty's Government ought to pursue in this matter.

I think I should point out that it was not by choice, but really from necessity, that the regulations on this subject became international. The most rev. Primate has said that he cannot understand why we should not be independent in this matter in Southern and Northern Nigeria because we have a German colony on one side and a French colony on the other. But I believe that what happened was this. Along the whole of that coast the Colonies of the various European nations which exist there have a comparatively small seaboard but very extensive inland frontiers, and it therefore was necessary to prevent this particular trade being carried on through one of the Colonies which chose to put on a lower form of duty to the detriment, not only of the regulation of the trade in the other Colonies, but also of their revenues. That, I believe, was the origin of the International Conferences; but, at any rate, the principle of International Conferences was adopted many years ago.

It was agreed that co-operation was essential, and the first Conference was held at Brussels in the year 1889. Since then there have been two other Conferences—one in 1899 and another last year. Now, my Lords, I think I can show that in all these Conferences this country has taken the lead in endeavouring to increase the restrictions which are placed upon this trade. In 1889 the proposal of the British Government was that the duty should be 200 francs per hectolitre. We were not very successful on that occasion, because the duty actually fixed was only fifteen francs. But in 1899 the proposal we then made was 100 francs, and we were successful in obtaining a duty of seventy francs; and I may say that that duty was only secured after a prolonged negotiation lasting two months. Last year, when the Conference met again, the proposal of the British Government was that the duty should be raised to 124 francs, and, after considerable discussion, it was increased to 100 francs. Therefore your Lordships will see that during the course of these Conferences we have steadily advocated an increase of duty, and have succeeded to a considerable extent in obtaining it. I might remind your Lordships that the duty I last quoted—100 francs per hectolitre—is equal to a duty of 4s. 8d. a gallon proof strength.

I rather think that in the debate in 1905 the most rev. Primate referred to 4s. as the duty which had been named by Mr. Chamberlain as the minimum, and which he, up to a point, at any rate, was prepared to accept as satisfactory. The most rev. Primate has asked why we should adhere to the minimum. My Lords, we do not adhere to the minimum. During the course of the period when the duty was fixed at seventy francs we raised ours gradually to ninety-six, and it stood at that figure until lately. I believe it is now placed at 110 francs per hectolitre at fifty degrees, and that, I am told, is equivalent to a duty of 5s. per gallon proof. I would ask your Lordships to observe that we have always been ready to accept the highest possible scale that we could obtain, and that therefore we have carried out to the best of our ability the first of the two main principles which we adopted for the guidance of the Conference—namely, that where this traffic in spirits existed it should be met by import duties.

The most rev. Primate has asked me to take up again a point which was mentioned in the last debate with regard to certain large sheds. I am afraid I omitted to notice that point in looking at the debate, and I did not receive any notice from the most rev. Primate that he was going to raise it. But perhaps this information may to some extent bear upon the matter. The record of the value of spirits imported into the Gold Coast as compared with the total import in these Colonies was 9 per cent. in 1898 and 6 per cent. in 1904. In Lagos and Southern Nigeria the proportion in 1898 was 11 per cent.; in 1904 it was 9 per cent.

The second of the main principles adopted for the Conference is the prohibition of the importation of spirits into districts where the use of liquor does not exist or has not been developed, and we have an enormous zone of prohibition, 300,000 square miles in Northern Nigeria coming under that definition. We have also what are called the northern territories of the Gold Coast. I have only to say that we have no intention of departing in any way from the application to those regions of the principle of the Conference to which I have referred.

With regard to the carriage by railway, I would point out that the railways are altogether in a state of infancy. The railway which has Lagos as its port is gradually approaching the frontier of Northern Nigeria, but I do not think it will be actually at work in the Protectorate for at least another year, and it will be still longer before it reaches the Niger, over which a very big bridge will have to be built before it can in any way get into contact with the whole of the large region north of the Niger.

It is true—and I should like to mention it because it may also have attracted the most rev. Primate's attention—that there have been proposals for another railway independent of the one of which I have been speaking, from Zungeru to a point on the Niger; but in that case also there is no crossing of the Niger, and, so far as any plans are yet formed, the railway will not connect with another railway system, but with a river service. In the Colonial Office we think that we shall have no difficulty in maintaining, as we intend to do, the prohibition of the introduction of this traffic into Northern Nigeria, or in preventing the use of the railways for this purpose. One suggestion was made three or four years ago that a sort of buffer zone should be established south of the frontier of Northern Nigeria; and it has also been suggested that we might refuse licences for the sale of liquor within this zone, and thereby increase facilities for checking any possible smuggling. I hope the the most rev. Primate will accept the assurance that it is our intention to prevent the traffic by every means in our power within the zone of prohibition. Upon the comparative cost of transit by railway and road it is difficult to be positive. On the railway the policy has been adopted of keeping the rates as high as possible without driving trade to the carriers. The most rev. Primate seemed to think that any apprehension on that score was unnecessary, but one case at any rate has been reported where traffic was being lost to the railway owing to a specially high rate on spirits. But the order issued in consequence was that rates were not to be so lowered as to cause risk of the trade being carried into the prohibited zone, and that in no case were they to be lower than the highest rate charged on other articles. I may quote an instance of rates—palm oil 35s. per ton; salt 33s.; gin and spirits, 52s.—that, I think, is a pretty heavy rate on the trade.

I entirely accept the necessity for maintaining restrictions, and it seems to me, in spite of what the most rev. Primate has said, that there is evidence to show that the result has not been altogether unsatisfactory. The evidence of a distinguished Governor, Sir W. McGregor, has often been quoted. I have also a report from Mr. Birtwistle, commercial intelligence officer for Southern Nigeria, who says that in Lagos the average consumption of spirits works out at far less than that of the United Kingdom, making a liberal allowance for the inhabitants cut off from supply. He further points out that in the United Kingdom also there is an enormous consumption of beer, and he adds that it cannot be said that there is

Lord Elgin.

excessive drinking in this territory. It is this gentleman's personal testimony that having been in Lagos every year except one since 1889, and having travelled up country and over the boundary, he could honestly say that to the best of his recollection he had not seen a score of intoxicated natives in fifteen years. According to a return obtained by Mr. Birtwistle from the Chief Registrar, the arrests for drunkenness in Lagos town during three years averaged only ·75 per 1,000 of the population. If I have not given the most rev. Primate all the information he desires, I shall be only too pleased to endeavour to supplement it, but I think I have satisfied him that there is every disposition to use all the powers we have in the desired direction.

LORD STANMORE: My Lords, I should like, with the permission of my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to put an additional Question to him arising out of the statement made by the most rev. Primate. I should like to know whether the Colonial Office has ever taken into consideration the possibility of enacting, in Southern Nigeria, legislation which has been found highly efficacious elsewhere with regard to this subject—I mean the rendering of debts incurred by natives for drink irrecoverable in Courts of law. Spirits are imported into the Colony in order that those who receive them may sell them. The vendor sells them because he hopes to receive a profit upon them, and if he knew that he could not recover the value of that which he sold I think he would be far less inclined to sell it. That has been found in another Colony the most efficacious way of preventing liquor reaching the natives.

THE EARL OF ELGIN: I am afraid I cannot answer the noble Lord's Question off-hand.

LORD STANMORE: I beg the noble Earl's pardon for asking it without notice, but it arose out of the debate.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 27th February, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

North Eastern and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways Bill (by Order); Shanklin Gas Bill (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order made by one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State under The Metropolitan Police Act, 1886," presented by Mr. Herbert Samuel; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 74.]

PETITIONS.

MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURE.

Petition from London, for limitation; to lie upon the Table.

TEACHERS' PENSIONS.

Petition from East London and South Essex, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour—from Birmingham; Maidstone; and Marylebone; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARTERIAL DRAINAGE COMMISSION (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Arterial Drainage in Ireland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 40 (Northern Nigeria), Memorandum on the Taxation of Natives in Northern Nigeria, by Sir F. D. Lugard, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., late High Commissioner [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Agricultural Statistics, 1906, Vol. XLI., Part II., Return of Produce of Crops in Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (PHOSPHORUS POISONING AT MESSRS. MORELAND'S MATCH FACTORY, GLOUCESTER).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by H. H. S. Cunyngham, Esq., C.B., Assistant Under Secretary of State, and B. A. Whitelegge, Esq., C.B., M.D., His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Factories, on the circumstances attending a fatal case of Phosphorus Poisoning at the Match Factory of Messrs. Moreland and Company, Gloucester [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Jenny Lang, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the Home of St. John the Baptist, London, S.W. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 21) Warrant, 1907, dated 14th February, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Bridlington Piers and Harbour.—Copy of Abstract of the General Annual Account for the year ending 26th July 1906 [by Act].

Railway, etc., Bills.—Copy ordered, "of Report by the Board of Trade upon all the Bills and Provisional Orders of Session 1907 relating to Railways, Canals, Tramways, Harbours and Tidal Waters, and the supply of Electricity, Gas and Water."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

The Naval Manœuvres.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been drawn to the remarks of the Board of Admiralty in the Report on the Naval Manœuvres of 1906, wherein it is stated that the manœuvres lost much of their value owing to the small and inadequate number of merchant vessels accepting the Admiralty terms, and that the 55 per cent. of loss inflicted is misleading, and affords little or no basis for calculation of the risks of shipping in war; and whether, under these circumstances, he will state the total cost of the Naval manœuvres.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The total cost of the Naval Manœuvres for 1906 was, approximately, £163,500.

Dual System in Belfast Post Office.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General, if it is intended at an early date to abolish the dual system at Belfast, as it has been done in other large cities; and, if not, can he explain why.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) It has been decided to abolish the dual system at Belfast, and effect has already been given to this decision in most respects, but it has not been practicable up to the present to carry out all the details involved by the alteration. The further measures required are receiving consideration.

Money Required to meet Sales of Irish Estates.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how much money will be required to meet the sales of estates in Ireland at present in the hands of the Estates Commissioners or about which negotiations are proceeding; and how much money is available to meet these sales when completed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have furnished the following Return showing the figures up to the 16th instant—

	£
(1) Direct sales. Amount of applications for advances pending	28,208,034
(2) Amount of advances comprised in estates offered for sale to the Commissioners (but for which advances have not yet been made).	
(*a*) Under Sections 6 and 8 (estimate)	1,810,060
(*b*) Under Section 7 (estimate)	811,604
(3) Amount of advances comprised in estates for which requests have been transmitted to the Land Commission by the Congested Districts Board, but for the purchase of which advances have not yet been made	804,078
Estimated total sum required for advances in cases of estates in which proceedings are pending	31,633,776
Estimated total cash available on 16th February, for future advances	1,635,207

Inny Junction Peat Works.

Mr. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will obtain from the Department of Agriculture a statement of the initiation, progress, cost, loss, and cause of failure of the Inny Junction Peat Works; and if the cause be want of drainage is any adequate drainage scheme in contemplation.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Department inform me that in 1904 experiments were instituted at Inny, county Westmeath, with a view to test whether Continental methods for the utilisation of peat as fuel could be successfully adopted in Ireland. In 1905 and 1906 Mr. A. Lough, Killeshandra, conducted the experiments at his own risk, the Department allowing him the free use of the machinery and of the bog for the purpose. He was prepared to continue the experiments for a further period on condition that the Department would purchase a portion of the Inny bog and resell it to him on Land Act terms, and also sell him the plant at a valuation. Legal difficulties, however, prevented this proposal from being carried out, and the Department, with the concurrence of the Agricultural Board, finally decided that there was no other course but to terminate the experiments. The question of drainage had nothing to do with this decision. The Department did not initiate the undertaking as a commercial speculation, but simply as an experiment, their chief object being to enable the rural population to win their natural fuel at a less expenditure of labour, which could then be devoted to agricultural pursuits. The cost from 1904 to the present date was £1,884 6s. 6d., exclusive of expert advice.

Crichton Estate, Roscommon.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether negotiations are in progress between the Estates Commissioners and the landlord of the Crichton estate in the county of Roscommon; and whether, before sanctioning any sale of this estate, the Commissioners will consider the advisability of acquiring all the grazing land in the hands of non-residential tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This estate has been purchased by the Congested Districts Board. The entire estate consists of tenanted land.

Irish Land Act—Section 54.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the fact that Section 54 of The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1903, causes much inconvenience by preventing landowners from borrowing money to stock and improve the lands they have purchased from their landlords, while it does not prevent the registration of judgment mortgages to any extent, and also that the latter part of the section, as to charges created by will, is unworkable, there being no duty to register the charge thrown on any person, and the will very often not being proved within the limit of time provided; and will he introduce legislation to amend or repeal entirely the section.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) As regards the first part of the Question, dealing with the limitations upon the borrowing powers of proprietors of holdings purchased under the Land Purchase Acts, the section of the Act of 1903 referred to was passed by Parliament with the general assent of all Parties (so far as I am aware), and I do not think any sufficient case has been made for repealing the provisions referred to. As regards the latter part of the section, dealing with charges created by will, a Bill has already been introduced to remedy the defects mentioned in the Question.

Anhui Mining Contract.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether any written reply has been received to a Note on the subject of the Anhui mining final contract, presented by His Majesty's Minister in Peking to the Chinese Government on 24th October, 1905; and, in view of the fact that the Chinese have had, since 5th January last, presented to them a plan by which the London and China Syndicate offer the Chinese the opportunity to participate to the extent of 40 per cent. in the development of the Anhui mining concession, whether he would consider the desirability of sending a telegram to His Majesty's Minister at Peking to ask for the decision of the Chinese on this proposal, so that the London and China Syndicate may immediately commence work on the Anhui mining concession.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative. In regard to the second part, it is understood that, as a result of his instructions, His Majesty's Minister is doing all he can at Peking to secure the acceptance of the proposed arrangement for Chinese participation. In these circumstances, there seems to be no good reason for sending further instructions to His Majesty's Minister, who is, of course, keeping in touch with the London and China Syndicate's agents in China.

Navy—Commanders on the Active List.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what were the number of commanders on the active list, the number of commanders in command of fully commissioned ships, and the percentage these formed of the full list of active commanders in January 1895, 1902, 1906, and 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) On the assumption that my honourable friend wishes to exclude shore establishments and stationary training ships, the numbers are as follows:—

	1895.	1902.	1906.	1907.
(1) Number of commanders on active list -	260	324	355	366
(2) Number of commanders in command of sea-going ships - - - - -	45	56	56	59
(3) Percentage of (2) to (1) - - -	17	17	16	16

Or, excluding ships in commission with nucleus crews, and, in previous years, coast and port guard ships, the figures would be as follows:—

	1895.	1902.	1906.	1907.
(2) Number of commanders in command of sea-going ships - - - - -	45	55	41	37
(3) Percentage of (2) to (1) - - -	17	17	11·5	10

Navy—Captains on the Active List.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what were the number of captains on the active list, the number of captains in command of fully commissioned ships, and the percentage these formed of the full list of captains in January 1895, 1902, 1906, and 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) On the assumption that my hon. friend wishes to exclude shore establishments and stationary training ships, the numbers are as follows:—

	1895.	1902.	1906.	1907.
(1) Number of captains on active list - -	174	214	239	249
(2) Number of captains in command of sea-going ships - - - - -	79	101	136	128
(3) Percentage of (2) to (1) - - -	45·4	49	57	51·4

Or, excluding ships in commission with nucleus crews, and, in previous years, coast and port guard ships, the figures would be as follows :—

	1895.	1902.	1906.	1907.
(2) Number of captains in command of sea-going ships - - - - - -	60	95	96	82
(3) Percentage of (2) to (1) - - -	34·5	44·4	40·1	32·5

Navy—Ships in Full Commission.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, the number of ships placed in full commission and the number paid off, excluding ships temporarily commissioned for naval manœuvres, for each year since 1898.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*)

Year.	Placed in full commission (1).	Paid off.
1898 . .	84	83
1899 . .	100	85
1900 . .	133	100
1901 . .	123	113
1902 . .	155	153
1903 . .	157	153
1904 . .	199	210
1905 . .	193	179 (2)
1906 . .	138	148 (2)

(1.) It is assumed that the list asked for is not intended to include ships commissioned with nucleus crews. In 1905, when the nucleus crew system came into force, there were 234 cases of commissioning, or recommissioning of ships with nucleus crew complement. When a ship with a full complement has been recommissioned with a full complement, the recommissioning has been counted; similarly, the paying off involved in this recommissioning has been counted. Such recommissioning is as material as a commissioning of a ship which had paid off a month or a year previously into a reserve division (old system) or into dockyard hands. These lists include all classes of ships. Ships employed as tenders have been counted.

(2.) As it has been assumed that ships "placed in full commission" may be taken to mean ships "commissioned with full complement," it is assumed that, for the purposes of this reply, "paid off" may be taken to mean "ceased to be in commission with full complement." For 1905 and 1906 the numbers (179 and 148) therefore include cases of vessels reduced from full complement to nucleus crew complement, *e.g.*, in 1906 only 101 were, strictly speaking, "paid off," the other forty-seven were reduced to nucleus crew.

Repairs to H.M.S. "Commonwealth."

MR. ERNEST LAMB (Rochester): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether H.M.S. "Commonwealth" can be be temporarily repaired at Gibraltar for the purpose of the passage Home, and then sent to Chatham Dockyard for permanent repair.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Arrangements have already been made for the "Commonwealth" to be temporarily repaired at Gibraltar for passage Home to Devonport Dockyard, that being her manning port, where the permanent repairs will be carried out.

Railway Combine to Maintain Freight Rates.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the railway companies of the three kingdoms are arranging a combination which will practically prevent competition as to rates, and that preferential cheap rates are given to importers and foreign manufacturers at a lower rate than is granted to native producers and manufacturers; whether he is aware that complaints have been made by traders respecting owners' risk rates; and whether he will inquire into those matters.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am aware that the railway companies have entered into an arrangement to put an end to a practice under which certain agents have allowed, out of the remuneration received from the railway companies, rebates to traders for the purposes of securing traffic. I am now making inquiries as to this matter. The preferential treatment of foreign merchandise over home traffic for the same or similar services is directly prohibited by Statute, but if the hon. Member will furnish me with any specific instances of the infringement of the Law I will have inquiry made into them. I have received complaints with regard to the conditions attached to owners' risk rates. A Bill dealing with the subject is set down for discussion on Friday, 15th March.

Expenditure of the Unemployed Fund on Emigration.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): To ask the President of the Local Government Board how much of the grant of £200,000 for the unemployed has been spent on emigration; how many persons have been assisted to emigrate; and to what parts of the world they have gone.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) Only one payment has, up to the present time, been made in aid of emigration out of Parliamentary grant, viz., one of £4,000 made last week to the West Ham Distress Committee. As the payment was so recently made, I am not yet in a position to give the particulars asked for in the last part of the Question, but I may say that the destination of the persons assisted to emigrate would usually be Canada.

Infant Mortality and Medical Assistance.

MR. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the statement recently made by Dr. G. Danford Thomas, one of the coroners for London, to the effect that much of the infant mortality is due to the failure to call in medical advice early enough; whether he will issue a circular to boards of guardians advising them to facilitate the calling in of the Poor Law doctor by poor people who cannot pay a doctor themselves; and further advising those boards of guardians which have a rule or practice making the cost of all medical relief a debt in the first instance, and those boards of guardians which require a father (or, if he is dead, the mother) of an infant who is receiving medical relief to appear before the board, to abolish such rule or practice in the case of infants under one year of age.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have not seen the statement attributed to Dr. Danford Thomas. As I have stated on a previous occasion, I have no reason to suppose that guardians are unwilling to afford medical relief for infants whose parents are unable to provide it, nor have I any evidence to show that persons properly entitled to receive relief are deterred from applying for it by the consideration referred to in the Question. It does not at present appear to me to be necessary to send a circular to all boards of guardians as suggested.

Books for Ships' Libraries.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether all books for ships' libraries in the Royal Navy that are bought from the publishing trade are charged to Class 2, Vote 23, Item I, of the Civil Service Estimates; whether any charges in this respect can be incurred by Navy Estimates; and, if so, under what Vote, and what item of that Vote.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) All books for ships' libraries in the Royal Navy that are bought from the publishing trade are charged to Class 2, Vote 23, Item I.

London County Council Election—The Trafalgar Square Meeting.

MR. HYDE (Wednesbury): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that men bearing hods full of bricks were allowed to enter Trafalgar Square during the meeting last Saturday; whether it was the duty of the police to have stopped the introduction of such missiles at a public meeting; whether the police had powers to interfere to prevent such introduction; and whether he proposes to take any steps in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I understand that the bricks were brought as emblems, not as missiles, and I am informed that none were thrown. The circumstances were not deemed to be such as to justify police interference.

Separate Courts for Children's Cases.

MR. TOULMIN (Bury, Lancashire): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he can give, to date, the names of those petty sessional courts which have established a separate court for children's cases, and separate hearings only of such cases.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I recently issued a circular asking for information as to how children's cases are dealt with in all petty sessional courts in England and Wales. The replies have nearly all been received, and I hope to be able to lay a complete Return upon the Table in a few days.

Indian Military Service Family Pensions.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the sixth quinquennial period under the Indian Military Service Family Pension Regulations ended on 31st March 1903, and why it takes four years for the actuaries employed by the India Office to make a valuation which any insurance company in London would do in six months; what is the assumed rate of interest, and under which actuarial table of mortality is the valuation made, under what head in the Indian Annual Accounts the receipts and disbursements on behalf of the fund and the balance to its credit are shown, and what rate of interest is allowed by the Indian Government on this balance; and whether he will cause to be republished for the information of those interested the original Government Order of 28th December 1872, and the regulation then laid down.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The sixth quinquennial valuation of the assets and liabilities arising under Indian Military Service Family Pension Regulations will show the position of affairs on the 31st of March, 1903. Detailed accounts and statistics have to be received from India before the necessary data can be prepared for the actuary to the India Office, the rates of mortality of subscribers and beneficiaries and the prospects of marriage of daughters, existing or prospective, have to be reassessed in accordance with the wider experience acquired in every quinquennial period, and new tables constructed thereon. Owing to pressure of other work, the valuation cannot be carried on continuously by the actuary, and the date of its completion is somewhat uncertain. The rate of interest assumed in this valuation is 4½ per cent. The receipts and payments are recorded in the Finance and Revenue Accounts, under "Army, Grant 19, Indian Military Service Family Pensions," on pages 206 and 214 of the last accounts presented. There is no balance, as no fund was created when the Regulations were issued. In the *pro forma* accounts of contributions levied and payments made under these Regulations interest is credited half-yearly at 4½ per cent. The rules have been modified from time to time and are published in Indian Army Regulations, but I have no objection to the republication of the original Government Order, No. 1315, dated the 28th December, 1872.

Increased Wages for Labourers in Army Ordnance Department, Ireland.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the labourers of the Army Ordnance Department, Ireland, are to receive increased wages at the rate of 20s. a week from 1st April next; and, if so, whether he will consider the case of the labourers in the Barrack Department, Army Service

Corps, with a view to a similar increase of wages.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The increase in the wages of the Army Ordnance Department referred to will take effect from the 1st April next. Barrack labourers are pensioners and, in addition to their salary of 15s. a week, receive in nearly all cases quarters and furniture for a nominal rental of 1s. 6d. a week. Their work is comparatively light. There would not, therefore, appear to be any strong grounds for the suggested increase in wages.

Ministry of Commerce.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is intended to introduce a Bill this session to appoint a Minister of Commerce, with provisions enabling the co-operation of a representative consultative committee.

(*Answered by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*) I am afraid that in the present state of public business it is impossible to give any undertaking.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Cost of Armies.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the total number of men on the peace establishment, and what is the total annual cost of the Armies of France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom respectively.

*The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The figures for 1906, which are taken from the Estimates, are as follows:—

	Peace Establishment, Regular Army.	Cost.
France - -	662,642*	£32,470,698
Germany - -	614,358†	36,770,882
Russia - -	1,225,000	39,878,281
United Kingdom	196,600‡	25,301,000§

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* Inclusive of Colonial Army.

† Exclusive of 9,500 one year Volunteers.

‡ Regular Forces (exclusive of India and the Army Reserve).

§ Inclusive of Cost of Reserve.

Cost of Colonial Garrisons.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the annual net cost to the British taxpayer for the military garrisons maintained in South Africa, in the West African Colonies, in Ceylon, in Mauritius, and in Egypt, including an allowance for the cost of training troops and for the cost of pensions and deferred pay.

Mr. HALDANE: The net cost for 1907–8 is as follows:—South Africa, £2,310,000; Sierra Leone, £217,000; Mauritius, £155,000; Ceylon, £28,000; Egypt, £470,000. These figures are approximate estimates and do not include the cost of sea transport services which cannot readily be appropriated to individual garrisons.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): And what is the cost to Egypt in addition?

Mr. HALDANE: I cannot say.

Imprisonment in India.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, having regard to the fact that over 15,000 persons are annually imprisoned in India, mostly for a period of a year or more, in default of furnishing security for good behaviour, he will consider the desirability of making some inquiry into the procedure under which so large a number of persons are committed to gaol on suspicion only.

The UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): As at present advised, I see no sufficient reason for making inquiry as to the procedure to which the hon. Member refers. I may remind the hon. Member that no person is ordered to furnish security except after a public judicial inquiry.

Orange River Colony Constitution.

Mr. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can now state approximately when the announcement about the new Constitution of the Orange River Colony will be made.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): The Letters Patent for the Orange River Colony will probably be published in April.

Trinidad—East Indian Immigration.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state what sum of money is spent by the Trinidad Government annually by way of assisting East Indian immigration; whether part of such sum is refunded by the sugar planters and the remaining portion borne by the public revenue; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any steps to prevent other industries being made to pay a tax so as to subsidise any one industry, as in this instance.

MR. CHURCHILL: About £60,000 a year is spent by the Trinidad Government in assisting Indian immigration. Two-thirds of this amount are refunded by the employers of indentured labour, including the sugar planters, and one-third is borne by the public revenues. As all the agricultural industries of the Colony and not only the sugar industry benefit by the introduction of Indian labour, and as these industries furnish, with the exception of bituminous deposits, practically the whole native wealth of the island, the Secretary of State does not consider that it can be correctly said that other industries are being taxed to subsidise the sugar industry, still less that the system should be changed.

Trinidad Labour for the Panama Canal.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if, in consequence of the distress at Trinidad, the Governor has given permission to a representative of the Panama Canal Commission to recruit Trinidad labour for work on the canal; and, if so, could he state the number of labourers so organised and sent to the canal zone, and the conditions of their employment.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Governor of Trinidad has reported that he has given facilities for the recruiting of labourers in that island for work on the Panama Canal, and that 1,000 men have been engaged. The form of contract entered into by the men was sanctioned by the Colonial Government, but its conditions have not been reported.

New Hebrides Labour Contracts.

SIR W. EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any provision will be made under the New Hebrides Convention for securing that natives shall fully understand the nature and terms of their service before they are engaged.

MR. CHURCHILL: As the hon. Member may have gathered from the fiftieth paragraph of the despatch printed on pages 53 to 66 of the recent Blue-book, the Answer is in the affirmative.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): Is it the case that the hon. Gentleman cannot make any concessions to hon. Members on this side without the consent of a foreign Power?

MR. CHURCHILL: That appears to have no reference whatever to the Question on the Paper.

Newfoundland Modus Vivendi.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will lay upon the Table the Address with reference to the *modus vivendi* with the Government of the United States adopted by both Houses of the Newfoundland Legislature.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Address has not yet been received. As to the presentation to Parliament of Papers on the subject of the *modus vivendi* I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I returned on the 18th instant to the hon. Member for Mid-Armagh.†

MR. ASHLEY: Will the Address be included in the Papers to be laid on the Table?

MR. CHURCHILL: Until it has been received and until the correspondence is complete I cannot say what Papers will be laid.

MR. ASHLEY: Is there any reason why the House should not know the opinion of the Colonial Legislature?

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 540-1.

MR. CHURCHILL: I should think it extremely improbable that the terms of the Address will be concealed from the hon. Members.

Repatriation of Chinese Coolies.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies how many Chinese have been repatriated from South Africa at Government expense to date on the ground alone that they considered indentured labour tantamount to slavery.

MR. CHURCHILL: The grounds on which individual applications have been made and acceded to have not been reported.

The Transvaal Government and Chinese Labour.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government intend leaving full and complete liberty to the new Transvaal Parliament of future legislation regarding Chinese or other indentured labour in the mines.

MR. CHURCHILL: I must refer the hon. Member to the provisions of the Letters Patent and the statements made upon them by Ministers, to which I do not feel myself under necessity of adding anything.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Cannot the hon. Gentleman say yes or no?

MR. CHURCHILL: The hon. and gallant Gentleman, who has a complete discretion as to the form in which he puts his Question, will allow me to exercise an equal discretion as to the form in which I put my Answer.

MR. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): Were the names of the gentlemen nominated as members of the Legislative Council in the Transvaal submitted for approval or——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

Canada and Germany.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that, in his Budget speech to the Canadian House of Commons on 29th November, 1906, the Minister of Finance said he was encouraged to believe that Canada might come to an understanding with Germany whereby the surtax should be removed; whether this is a reference to the surtax which was imposed by Canada because Germany levied the general tariff against Canada while extending most-favoured-nation treatment to the products of the United Kingdom; and, if so, whether he can inform the House on what grounds Mr. Fielding was encouraged to believe it might be removed.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury, for Sir EDWARD GREY): My right hon. friend has seen the Report of Mr. Fielding's speech. But it would hardly be proper for him to take upon himself to interpret it, if the hon. Member considers that any interpretation is required. Nor can my right hon. friend say upon what grounds Mr. Fielding based his statement. The question is one within Mr. Fielding's own competence and that of his colleagues, and though my right hon. friend has no special information with regard to the speech, he is sure that Mr. Fielding had good reason for what he said.

Death Duties.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been directed to the practical working of Section 5, Subsection 1, Section 17, and Section 22, Sub-section 1 (h) of the Finance Act, 1894, whereby in the event of only a small portion of a deceased's estate being settled, other parties being contingently entitled absolutely, nevertheless Settlement Estate Duty is, on the authority of "Attorney-General v. Fairley," 1897, 1 Q.B., 698, demanded and collected in advance upon the whole estate, and that those who become absolutely entitled only receive back from the Inland Revenue their portions of the duty years afterwards, and without interest, as provided in Section 14 of the Finance Act, 1898; and whether he will introduce legislation to remedy this grievance.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I am not clear whether the hon. Member's suggestion is that property contingently settled should be relieved entirely from the payment of Settlement Estate Duty, or that, when duty contingently paid falls to be reimbursed under Section 14 of the Act of 1898, the repayment should be made with interest. But, in any case, I do not think that the circumstances warrant the introduction of fresh legislation extending the relief which the existing law gives to taxpayers in such cases.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been directed to the practical working of The Finance Act, 1894, Section 4, and The Finance Act, 1900, Section 12, whereby for the purpose of fixing the rate of duty payable on the decease of any person all the property passing on such decease requires to be aggregated, and a higher rate is imposed upon the higher aggregated amounts, notwithstanding that the component amounts may arise under several different wills, settlements, or dispositions; and, in view of the effect upon the recipient of a small benefit arising upon such death, whether he will introduce legislation or take some other action by way of remedy.

MR. ASQUITH: This would involve a practical abandonment of the principle of aggregation upon which the Estate Duty has up to now been levied, as well as an entire reconstruction of the scale of duties. There are many objections to the adoption of the suggestion, but it is too wide a subject for me to deal with adequately in a reply to a Question.

Taximeter Motor Cabs.

MR. SEAVERNS (Lambeth, Brixton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the cabdrivers of London are gravely dissatisfied with the conditions of employment offered them by the company proposing to operate taximeter motor cabs in London; whether the proposed revolution in the cab system of London involves sweating conditions for the men engaged therein; and whether he will postpone the operation of the Public Carriage Order until he has satisfied himself that reasonable remuneration will be offered to the men.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The Cabdrivers' Union have expressed to me their dissatisfaction with the terms of the company referred to, which terms, however, I understand have been accepted by the company's drivers. As regards the Public Carriage Order, my attention was called to certain legal difficulties which might arise from a possible interpretation of the construction of Section 9 (3) of the Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869, in reference to certain provisions of the Acts of 1853 as to cab fares. On this I asked the law officers for their opinion, which I received on Saturday last. Their opinion necessitates reconsideration of certain parts of the Order, which consequently cannot yet be issued.

Naval Uniforms in Political Demonstrations.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the fact that in a procession forming part of an open-air demonstration held in Trafalgar Square on Saturday afternoon last, organised under the auspices of a body calling itself the Municipal Reformers, a trolly was drawn through the streets of London carrying a paper representation of a steamboat, by the side of which stood a person, presumably in command of the same, dressed in the uniform of an officer of His Majesty's Navy; whether such representation is contrary to regulations; and, if so, what steps it is proposed to take to prevent a repetition of such use of the uniform worn by officers in the naval service.

MR. GLADSTONE: The police, who witnessed the incident mentioned, reported that there was no such wearing of a uniform as appeared to constitute an offence against the Uniforms Act, 1894. That Act will of course be enforced if occasion should arise.

Dale Hill Motor Fatality.

MR. RADFORD (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Matthias Medhurst, a cyclist, who was killed by a motor car at the foot of Dale Hill, near Brighton; and whether, in view of the number of deaths to cyclists from the same cause, he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation to protect the lives of cyclists.

MR. GLADSTONE: I understand that at the inquest yesterday the jury returned an open verdict. The driver of the motor car has been brought before the magistrates, and remanded on bail. Any question of amendment of the Motor Car Acts is a matter for the Local Government Board.

Alien Criminal in London.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the recent trial of a Russian for burglary committed in London, when the Russian, on conviction for the third time, begged that an order should not be made for his expulsion, as he would be killed if he were sent back to Russia; and whether he will be classed, in consequence, as a political refugee and entitled to asylum in this country as such.

MR GLADSTONE: I have been unable to identify the case from the particulars given. Perhaps the hon. Member will kindly send me further details, such as the name of the man and the court at which and the date on which he was convicted.

Women and Children in Public-houses.

MR. FIENNES (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that in some parts of London and other large towns the public-houses are frequently filled with women and young children; and whether in the proposed Licensing Bill he will include proposals to deal with this question.

MR. GLADSTONE: There is no doubt, I am afraid, that in many places women, accompanied by young children, frequent public-houses far more than is, for many reasons, desirable. It is a matter of great difficulty to see the right remedy for the evil; and I must refrain from making any statement at the present moment as to legislation on the point

Law of Copyright.

MR. BECKETT (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that early and defective editions of Ruskin's books, discarded by Ruskin himself, are now being reprinted by several firms of London publishers and offered for sale in Great Britain and in the Colonies; and whether, as reprinting of misleading and obsolete editions of important ethical and scientific works, such as those of Ruskin and Darwin, is becoming so prevalent, he will introduce a Bill amending the law of copyright with a view to check this evil.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I am unable at present to make any promise as to the early introduction of copyright legislation, but when this can be undertaken the question of finding a remedy for the evil referred to shall not be overlooked.

Scottish Railway Companies and Owner's Risk Notes.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the practice of railway companies in Scotland of practically forcing traders (by means of exacting conditions as to packing, etc.), to consign their goods under owner's risk notes; whether he is aware that under these notes the whole responsibility for damage to the goods, even for their existence, is transferred to the owners; and whether he will introduce legislation to remedy this state of matters.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am aware that railway companies decline to carry certain articles unless properly protected by packing at other than owner's risk. The question whether this condition is as regards any particular article just and reasonable is one for a legal tribunal, but if representations were received with regard to particular articles on which the condition is regarded to press unduly, the Board of Trade would be prepared to exercise their good offices in an endeavour to effect a friendly settlement of the matter. The whole question of "owner's risk" in my judgment requires re-consideration. I understand that a Bill which proposes to vary the conditions relating to owner's risk has been introduced by the hon. Member for South-east Durham, and will probably be discussed shortly in this House.

The Board of Trade.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Board has ever met; and, if so, whether he will state the date of the last meeting.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: All the members of this Board, like many another Board, are, except the chairman, purely nominal members. The last meeting of the Board of Trade attended by members other than the President appears to have been held on 5th March, 1850.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman as representing the Department largely concerned in the administration of the Joint Stock Companies Act, if I am to infer that he is in favour of one-man companies?

[No Answer was returned.]

Steamship Passenger Lists—The Loss of the ' Berlin."

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the difficulty experienced in ascertaining the names of the passengers on the last voyage of the ill-fated "Berlin," he will favourably consider the question of issuing regulations making it compulsory on shipping companies to send ashore a complete list of passengers prior to the sailing of every vessel.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I will certainly look into and carefully consider whether anything practical can be done in the direction suggested by the hon. Member.

"Pontypool Union v. Buck."

Mr. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the decision of the Court of King's Bench on the appeal of the "Pontypool Union *v.* Buck," 71 J.P.R., 5, that a married woman with ample separate estate is not liable to contribute towards the maintenance of her parents or parent; and whether, seeing that this decision creates a distinction between the sexes, as a son with property, or of sufficient wage-earning capacity, is so liable, he will consider the desirability of removing this distinction by legislation.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. I replied to one of a similar kind on the 18th inst.† As I then stated, I have taken note of the point referred to, but I cannot promise to introduce legislation on the subject at the present time.

Spotted Fever in London.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, how many cases of spotted fever, or suspected to be spotted fever, have been notified in London during the present month; and how many cases are still under treatment.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: The disease is not at present compulsorily notifiable in London, but I have made inquiry and have only heard of three cases having occurred in London during the present month. Two of them proved fatal. I may add that the County Council have taken steps during the last five days to make it a notifiable disease.

Mr. ASHLEY: After what period, can the right hon. Gentleman say?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: It comes into operation after the expiration of three days.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he would issue to boards of guardians, relieving officers, and Poor Law medical officers, the circular as to spotted fever or cerebro-meningitis which he proposes to issue to the sanitary authorities; and further, whether he would suggest to the guardians and relieving officers that poor sick persons and the poor parents of sick children should not, at the present time, if they state they are unable to pay for a doctor, be deterred from making application for medical assistance by the fear of having the relief made a debt or by the fear of having to come before the guardians or a Committee.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 555–6.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am sending to boards of guardians the Memorandum which accompanied the circular referred to, with a view to its distribution amongst Poor Law medical officers. As regards the latter part of the Question, I have no reason to suppose that persons properly entitled to receive medical relief are deterred from applying for it by the considerations mentioned by my hon. friend, and it does not seem to me necessary to communicate with the guardians on the subject.

Report on Local Authorities' Accounts

MR. RADFORD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, when an interim Report from the Departmental Committee on the accounts of local authorities may be expected to be laid upon the Table of the House; and whether he will cause the minutes of evidence already taken, with the proceedings of the Committee, to be printed and circulated with the interim Report.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have received an interim Report from the Committee; but I understand that they think that, when they make their Report on the remaining part of the reference to them, they may see reason to modify the details of some of the conclusions at which they have provisionally arrived. In these circumstances, they consider that it will be better to defer publication until the complete Report can be laid before Parliament. The Committee are now considering their further Report, and it is hoped that it will shortly be completed.

Post Office Accounts.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will consider the advisability of presenting the accounts of the Telegraph and Telephone Department in such a shape as the law requires in regard to commercial undertakings carried on by joint stock companies.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am considering, in concert with the Treasury, whether the Telegraph and Telephone accounts can be improved in form. The hon. Member is no doubt aware that their form is partly prescribed by statute.

Welsh Education Department.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education how many of those appointed to the newly-formed Welsh Department are to be drawn from outside the Civil Service; what salaries they are to be paid; and whether any preference is to be given in making these appointments to Welshmen.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The answer to the first paragraph is, for the present, three only; to the second paragraph £1,200, £1,200, and £250 to £600; and to the third paragraph the answer is yes.

LORD R. CECIL: Will similar preference be given to Englishmen in the English Education Department?

MR. MCKENNA: The answer to that is that in the Education Department at the present moment there are no Welshmen at all. As a Welsh Department was about to be started, it was desirable, under the circumstances, that some Welshmen should be associated with that Department.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) inquired whether in making the Welsh nominations any local preference would be shown.

MR. MCKENNA: I do not know what my hon. friend means by local preference. If he means within Wales itself, no.

Swansea Education Dispute.

LORD R. CECIL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he has yet decided the legal questions raised by the Swansea local education authority with reference to the appointment of teachers in non-provided schools; and, if so, what is that decision.

MR. MCKENNA: The decision is being sent to the managers and the local authority. Without going into details, I may say generally that, in the circumstances in question, the managers must sign the agreements with the teachers, and, in the absence of any intimation from the local authority as to the salaries to be inserted, and in so far as the terms of the agreements are reasonable, it will become the duty of the local education authority to accept financial responsibility for them.

LORD R. CECIL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the teachers of the non-provided schools in Swansea are given equal treatment in all respects by the local education authority with those of a similar grade in provided schools, and, if not, what difference is made between the two sets of teachers, and what is the reason for such difference.

MR. McKENNA: It is impossible for me to say whether teachers in any school are given equal treatment in all respects with teachers in any other schools. As I understand the situation, the local authority at Swansea have not fixed any scale of salaries for teachers in the Voluntary Schools in their area, but so far as I am aware, though I am not certain, the authority have paid the salaries contained in the agreements in force previous to the appointed day between the managers and the teachers.

LORD R. CECIL: Has there been a perpetual request from the managers that the teachers should receive the ordinary rise of salary which they would have had had they remained under the exclusive control of the managers?

MR. McKENNA: So far as I am aware the only perpetual request has been that the authority should inform the managers of the amount of salary which should be inserted by them in the agreements with the teachers.

Education Bill.

MR. MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he will inform the House when he proposes to introduce the new Education Bill.

MR. McKENNA: I am not quite certain which Bill the hon. Member refers to, but I hope to present for introduction next week an Education (Administrative Provisions) Bill, which will include the uncontroversial clauses in last year's measure.

Parliamentary Hairdressers' Wages.

MR. WILKIE (Dundee): On behalf of the hon. Member for Chatham, I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works, whether he is aware that the hairdressers engaged at the House of Commons receive £1 per week and are compelled to lose all time during Parliamentary vacations; and, if so, whether he will use his influence at least to secure for the hairdressers a higher wage.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): The hairdressers are the servants of Mr. Slater, who has held the appointment since it was first made in 1895. I am not aware of the wages paid. The hairdressing room is closed during the recess. I do not know whether higher wages for the men are compatible with the lower charges asked for by Members last year.

MR. WILKIE: Will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain the amount of wages?

MR. HARCOURT: Yes.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): Does the Fair Wages Clause apply to this contract?

MR. HARCOURT: There is no contract.

Imprisonment for Debt.

MR. MACLEAN (Bath): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, in view of the favourable consideration given last session by the Lord Chancellor and himself to the advisability of abolishing imprisonment for non-compliance with orders of the county court for monetary payments, he is now able to state whether legislation will be introduced at an early date to amend the Law.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir JOHN WALTON, Leeds, S.): I understand the subject is still under the consideration of the Lord Chancellor, and that he contemplates the introduction of legislation, but I cannot say when.

Corrupt Practices Act.

MR. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the growing practice of evading the Corrupt Practices Act; whether he is aware that a political procession took place on Saturday last, and that men received payment from a newspaper for taking part therein; and whether he intends to take any action in the matter.

SIR JOHN WALTON: I have nothing to add to what I said on Monday last.† If any breach of the law has taken place my hon. friend should bring it before the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Chief Officer of Customs—Age Limit.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention has been called to the age limit fixed at forty for future appointments to Chief Officers of Customs; and if he will undertake that this age limit is applied to future appointments to the Surveyor-General's and other offices.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The age limit was fixed in the case of appointments to the duties of Chief Officer because that grade is regarded as a valuable training ground for officers eligible for positions of higher rank in the service to which it is undesirable to appoint men past the prime of life. The Board of Customs inform me that they see no reason for extending the limit to other posts.

Customs Assistant Clerks.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the reply received by the new class of assistant clerks in the Customs Statistical Office, to the effect that a larger proportion of assistant clerks of special merit may, in the future, be promoted to port clerkships than has hitherto been the case; and whether he will state how many of the new class of assistant clerks had received promotion prior to the date of the reply, and the number of such clerks that have since been promoted.

MR. RUNCIMAN: It is to be observed that the term assistant clerk includes the old section called "abstractors" as well as the new section called "tabulators." So far as the promotions to port clerkships only are concerned two of the abstractors (one from the Statistical Office and one from the Long Room) were promoted to port clerkships before the date of the reply in question. Since that time one of the tabulators serving in the Long Room has been so promoted.

Dailly School Board.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that a difficulty has arisen in the filling of the chairmanship of the school board in the parish of Dailly, rendered vacant by the death of Sir James Fergusson; and will he take steps towards getting the vacancy filled by the usual method of procedure, viz., by the appointment of the nearest unsuccessful candidate at the election.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The Department has now received intimation of the resignation of two of the remaining members of the Board. As there is thus no quorum of the Board the Department will take steps to order a fresh election in terms of Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

Procurators-Fiscal Offices.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been called to the fact that in several of the premises of the procurators-fiscal in the West of Scotland, which are owned, furnished, and maintained in lighting, heating, and caretaking by public money, parts of these premises are let or given to outside tenants or occupiers; will he say if any rent is charged in these cases; and, if not, will he see that a stop is put to the practice.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): My attention has not been called to the practice referred to in the Question, and I should be obliged to my hon. friend if he would furnish to me details of the specified instances to which he refers, so that inquiry may be instituted.

Trim and Glin Industrial School Officials.

MR. SHEEHY (Meath, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland on what grounds do the Local Government Board refuse to sanction a retiring allowance to the officials of the Trim and Glin industrial schools; whether officials discharging duties of a similar class, employed under the Poor Law, are entitled to such allowance; and, if a legal obstacle does exist to the governors of these institutions giving any retiring allowance to the officials who have served them faithfully and with zeal, will he take steps, by legislation or otherwise, to remove the existing impediment.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1260-2.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange): I am informed by the Local Government Board that the ground upon which they refuse to sanction a retiring allowance to the officials mentioned in the Question is that there is no enactment, of which they are aware, which would authorise them to do so. I understand that officials discharging duties of a similar class employed under the Poor Law Acts are entitled to such an allowance. The Government will consider the question of introducing legislation extending the right to a retiring allowance to officers of industrial district schools, but having regard to the number and importance of bills affecting Irish matters which have already been promised for the present session I cannot at present give any more definite undertaking on the subject.

Irish Untenanted Lands.

MR. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in view of the fact that most Irish counties contain small congested areas, many uneconomic agricultural holdings, and untenanted land wherewith those conditions could be relieved, will he, in connection with the extensive transfer of ownership now going on, have statistical tables relating to the whole of Ireland, similar to those relating to Donegal, with the addition of untenanted land, prepared for issue with the final Report of the Commission on Congestion; and can he say how soon that final Report will be presented.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am informed that the Royal Commission on Congestion have had statistical tables, similar to those relating to Donegal, prepared for each county in Ireland, and it is intended to publish the tables relating to the counties which contain scheduled congested districts as an appendix to the evidence taken in those counties. The question whether the tables relating to non-congested counties shall be published has not yet been decided by the Commission. The Commissioners inform me that they are not yet able to say when their final Report will be ready. A great deal of evidence remains to be taken.

Coercive Purchase Agreements.

MR. GINNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in view of the number of cases in which tenants are coerced to sign purchase agreements by writs, civil bills, and other forms of pressure, depriving the agreements of a voluntary character and deterring the tenants from seeking protection, do the Estate Commissioners require in those cases a disclosure of the vendor's accounts and proceedings against the tenants; do they get the lands inspected for value notwithstanding the zones; and what steps, if any, do they take to keep the price within the value.

MR. BIRRELL: If a holding which is held under a judicial tenancy is included in lands declared by the Estates Commissioners to be an "estate" for the purposes of the Act, then, provided the price comes within the zones, the Commissioners hold that they have no discretion as to the price, and are bound to make the advance. If, however, the purchasing tenants should allege that the agreement was entered into under duress, and the Commissioners should find such to be the fact, they will, in the exercise of their powers, refuse to act upon the agreement.

Land Judge's Court and Purchase Agreements.

MR. GINNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when, as in a recently reported case, tenants on an estate for sale in the Land Judge's Court have offered a price, and the Land Judge instructs the receiver, by exercise of his penal powers, to get the tenants to consent to a higher price, and the Judge adds to the receiver's salary an additional payment proportionate to the increase thus obtained, do the Estates Commissioners ascertain by inspection the actual value of the property involved before advancing prices and bonus; and, if not, will he state how are the interests of the purchasers and of the public safeguarded in the transaction.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that before making an offer to the Land Judge for the purchase of an estate they have an inspection made, and the price offered is their estimate of the value, based on the information obtained by inspection. As regards the preamble to the Question, the Land Judge informs me that he is aware of no such case as is referred to. The Judge would strongly condemn the action of any receiver who should seek by threats to influence the tenants to pay a higher price. The suggestion that the receiver's salary is increased in proportion to the prices obtained is, the Judge states, entirely without foundation. The remuneration of a receiver for negotiating sales is fixed by the Judge solely upon a consideration of the work done.

West of Ireland Potato Crop.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is yet in a position to make a full statement of the measures which the Irish Government propose to take for the relief of the distress in those districts of the West of Ireland where the potato crop has failed.

Mr. BIRRELL: Local inquiries are being made in the districts in the West where the failure of the potato crop has been most felt, and the Vice-President of the Local Government Board is just starting for the West with a view to the completion of the arrangements. I hope in the course of a short time to confer with him and to be in a position to give the full statement which the hon. Member asks for.

Massy Estate, County Leitrim.

Mr. DOLAN (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the sale of the Massy Estate, situated at Gubaveeney, Derryherk, barony of Rosclogher, county Leitrim, is pending before the Estates Commissioners; whether the Estates Commissioners are aware that the estate in question consists largely of bog and marsh land, and is not security for twenty-two and a half years' purchase, the price demanded by the landlord; whether they are aware that the tenants have accepted these terms through fear, lest legal proceedings should be taken against them for arrears of rent if they refused to accept them; and whether the Estates Commissioners will refuse to sanction the sale of this estate at twenty-two and a half years' purchase.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that neither of the townlands mentioned is included in the proceedings for sale in respect of the Massy Estate which have been instituted before them. The Commissioners are not aware of the facts alleged in the Question, but when dealing with the estate they will be prepared to consider any representations which may be made to them as regards the circumstances under which the purchase agreements were signed.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say what is the amount of the arrears due from tenants on this estate?

Mr. BIRRELL: I cannot without notice.

Land Purchase in County Sligo.

Mr. O'DOWD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state the number of estates in the county of Sligo for which purchase agreements have been entered into, from the passing of the Land Act of 1903 up to the present time; the number of sales made by private treaty; and the number of estates purchased by the Estates Commissioners and Congested Districts Board respectively, with the average number of years purchase paid in each case.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received, under the Act of 1903, 2,666 agreements for direct sale from landlords to tenants, the number of estates being seventy-three, and the average number of years purchase, 23·6. Proceedings for the sale of ten estates to the Commissioners have been instituted, and four of these are being purchased, the number of purchasing tenants being 506, and the average number of years purchase being 21·1. The Commissioners have no information as to the sales effected by private treaty. The Congested Districts Board have since the passing of the Land Act of 1903, purchased seven estates in the county Sligo, for sums amounting to £101,178, being an average of twenty-three and a quarter years purchase of the rentals including the estimated annual value of the untenanted lands.

Beet Growing in Ireland.

MR. O'DOWD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that recent experiments made on plots of inferior land in the West of Ireland and elsewhere, have shown that the saccharine matter in Irish-grown beet almost doubles that of beet grown in Germany, and that the crop can be cultivated almost as easily as any other root crop; and, if so, whether it is his intention to impress on the Department of Agriculture the importance of encouraging the growth of beet-root in Ireland, and the advisability of experimenting on a practical scale with the view of producing sugar from Irish beet on a paying basis.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that the Department are aware that experiments in the cultivation of beet have been made on small plots of land in Ireland and that in some cases the beet has been found to be rich in sugar. The Department state that they have satisfied themselves by careful inquiry that it is not possible to guarantee that beet would be cultivated in any one district in Ireland over a sufficiently large area to warrant the expenditure of the large capital sums necessary for the building and equipment of a sugar factory. They believe also that beet could not be made as remunerative a crop as other root crops now grown in Ireland, and on these grounds do not think they would be justified in encouraging the growing of beet in this country or in undertaking an experiment of the nature suggested. I will send the hon. Member a statement giving details which could not well be included in the limits of an oral Answer.

Seed Potato Supplies for Distressed Districts.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the full particulars of the plans adopted by the Local Government Board and the Department of Agriculture in Ireland for providing seed in districts in which the potato crop failed last year.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board are affording employment in distressed areas to those persons, fortunately not very numerous this year, who are too poor to purchase seed for cash, or to obtain it on loan, and arrangements are in progress which will enable such persons to expend their earnings in purchasing imported seed. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, which has no functions in regard to relief of distress, has schemes at work in the western districts for facilitating a change of seed for the potato and other crops. These schemes include arrangements for the sale on favourable terms of limited quantities of good seed, the produce of which is intended to be reserved for seed purposes the following year. In addition, loans are being made through Agricultural Banks to enable occupiers to purchase seed potatoes with the advantages of the terms which are available for cash payments and bulked orders. The Department assists by inspection, as far as practicable, of the seed purchased under these schemes. The latter are a preliminary part of a system for the permanent improvement of the western districts which was outlined on behalf of the Department in evidence before the Royal Commission on Congestion. It would be impracticable to give details of this system in reply to a Question, but they can be furnished to the hon. Member in a few days if he desires.

Dromagh Untenanted Lands.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received any recent communications from Mr. W. N. Leader, J.P., D.L., Dromagh, county Cork, in reference to the proposed sale of his untenanted land, nearly 2,000 acres; and whether, in view of the anxiety of many evicted tenants in the locality to acquire holdings, and of deserving labourers to secure suitable allotments under the Labourers Act of 1906, the Commissioners will instruct their inspector to visit the estate and make inquiry, under the provisions of the Land Act of 1903.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have not received any recent communication from Mr. W. Leader. The Commissioners will instruct their inspector to make full inquiries as to the wants and circumstances of the neighbourhood before they sanction any arrangement as to the untenanted land on the estate.

MR. FLYNN: Will the Estates Commissioners give power to their inspector to initiate negotiations in regard to this estate and thus avoid unnecessary delay?

MR. BIRRELL: I will look into that.

Irish Department of Agriculture.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commission which is inquiring into the Department of Agriculture in Ireland finished taking evidence last November; what is the cause of the delay in the issue of the Report of the Commission; and when it may be expected.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that the Committee held its last public sitting for the reception of evidence on 23rd November last, and is now engaged in the preparation of its Report which, it is hoped, will be ready in May next. The evidence taken at the inquiry occupied forty-nine sittings, and extends to some thousand pages of print. The Committee inform me that no avoidable delay will take place in the issue of the Report.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Does the right hon. Gentleman think an interval of six months for considering the Report after closing the evidence is reasonable? Will he not use his influence to expedite the Report, seeing that a discussion of the Department without it would be difficult?

MR. BIRRELL: I will see the chairman again and represent to him the views of the hon. Member.

Galway and Mayo Agricultural Banks.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give the number of agricultural banks in the Connemara Division of Galway and the East Mayo Division of Mayo respectively; whether he will state the present condition of these banks; and whether it is proposed to use the agricultural banks as the sole machinery for distributing potato seed in distressed districts in Ireland.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that the Department have no records at their disposal which would enable them to state with accuracy the exact number of agricultural banks in a particular Parliamentary Division, but they believe it would be approximately correct to say that there are six agricultural banks in the Connemara Division of Galway, and seven in the East Mayo Division of Mayo. The condition of these banks on the whole is reported to be satisfactory. With a view to encouraging the introduction of fresh seed potatoes and oats, the Department have arranged to grant special loans repayable in one year to a limited number of agricultural credit societies in the poorer districts of the west. The Department's action is quite independent of the matter of the relief of distress, which forms no part of their functions. As regards the last paragraph of the Question, I have stated in reply to the hon. Member's earlier Question the measures proposed to be taken for distributing potato seed.

American Gooseberry Mildew.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the damage being wrought in Ireland by the spread of the American gooseberry mildew; whether the steps taken by the Department of Agriculture have had any effect in checking the spread of the disease; and whether the Department will consider the establishment of a system of inspection of nuserymen's stocks of gooseberry bushes and cuttings, so as to prevent the distribution of diseased plants.

MR. BIRRELL: The Department of Agriculture are aware that the American gooseberry mildew exists in certain counties in Ireland, and have taken all possible steps to check the spread of the disease, which it is hoped will produce the desired effect. The Department have already had the stocks in the principal nurseries inspected, and have advised the destruction of such bushes as were found to be infected.

Mr. Burrowes' Londonderry Estate.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the remarks of Mr. Justice Ross, in the Land Judge's Court, on 28th January, in reference to the estate of George Burrowes, of county Londonderry; and whether, in view of the statement by the Land Judge that the Estates Commissioners have been taking an utterly illegal course in revising, without evidence, agreements arrived at between landlords and tenants within the zones, he intends to direct the Estates Commissioners to conform to the law.

MR. BIRRELL: The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. As to the second part, I am informed that the Estates Commissioners are of opinion that the learned Land Judge's observations were based on misconceptions, and that they propose to take such action as will give an opportunity for a final decision on the point.

Crime in County Clare.

*CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many cases of outrage or attempted outrage, in which firearms were used, took place in the county of Clare during the month of January, 1907; in how many cases were persons wounded; and have any, and how many, persons been arrested in connection with such outrages or attempted outrages.

MR. BIRRELL: The Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary informs me that during the period named four such cases occurred in county Clare, and in two of the cases persons were wounded. One person has been arrested in each of the four cases; three of these have been returned for trial at the Assizes, and one is on remand.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Pending the trial of the prisoners will the Irish Government see that no prominent politicians make speeches calculated to prejudice the cases?

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): As this question is calculated to discredit the country, may I ask if it is not the fact that at the last Assizes the Judge congratulated the Grand Jury on the peaceable condition of the country?

MR. BIRRELL: Certainly, that is so.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): How many outrages took place in county Down in the same period?

MR. BIRRELL: I cannot tell.

*CAPTAIN CRAIG: The Answer refers to four cases but I can supply evidence of seven cases for the right hon. Gentleman to inquire into.

MR. BIRRELL: I am content to rely on the information given me by the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Alleged Outrage at Cloghroe.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any arrests have been made in connection with the recent dynamite outrage perpetrated near Cloghroe, in the Parliamentary division of Mid Cork.

MR. BIRRELL: The police authorities are carefully investigating this alleged outrage. No arrest has been made.

MR. FLYNN: Is there not some doubt in the minds of the Constabulary as to whether this outrage occurred at all?

MR. BIRRELL: There is some doubt as to the circumstances.

MR. MOORE: Is it not the fact that the victim has been boycotted for fifteen years?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no information as to that.

MR. MOORE: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire?

MR. BIRRELL: Yes.

County Donegal Fishery By-laws.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a resolution of the County Council of Donegal regarding a by-law proposed to be enacted by the Department of Agriculture restricting the fishermen's rights of public fishing in the ocean off certain portions of the coast of county Donegal; and whether, in view of the protests of this and of other public bodies, the Lord-Lieutenant will refuse his sanction to the proposed by-law.

MR. BIRRELL: The resolution in question has been received, but the proposed by-law to which it refers has not yet been submitted to the Lord-Lieutenant in Council for approval. In accordance with the invariable practice, all persons who are opposed to such a by-law will have an opportunity, before the by-law is sanctioned, of appearing in person, or by counsel, before the Committee of the Privy Council.

Moonlighting at Craughwell.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a party of moonlighters carrying arms has lately attacked the house of Mrs. Ryan in the village of Craughwell, county Galway, into which they fired four shots; that Mrs. Ryan's residence is within twenty yards of the police barracks; and that some of the pellets, after passing through the back and front windows of the house, lodged in the walls of the police barrack; and whether the police have arrested anyone in connection with the matter.

MR. BIRRELL: The Inspector-General reports that at 8.20 p.m. on the 8th instant one revolver shot was fired from the rear of Mrs. Ryan's house at Craughwell. The bullet penetrated the window of a small room at the back of the house and lodged in the wall of the room. At the same time a large stone was thrown through a window on the other side of the door into another small room. Mrs. Ryan's house is opposite the barrack, but no pellets struck the barrack or passed through the front windows of Mrs. Ryan's house. The police are inquiring into the matter, but up to the present have no evidence to justify an arrest.

New Inn Branch of the United Irish League.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at a meeting of the New Inn branch of the United Irish League, in county Galway, lately a resolution was passed calling on all graziers who hold land in the parish to surrender the same by May next and not to block the people any longer from getting the land; and, seeing that it was decided to adopt proper measures towards graziers who did not comply with the resolution, and also to publish a list of graziers who were to give up their lands, whether, in the event of an attempt being made to use boycotting or intimidation to enforce this resolution, he will employ the forces at his disposal to protect these graziers in the exercise of their legal rights.

MR. BIRRELL: A report of the meeting of the New Inn Branch of the League is published in the *Connaught Leader* of 16th instant, from which it appears that resolutions in the terms mentioned in the Question were passed. The police will give all necessary protection to all persons requiring it in this district.

Leitrim Extra Police Charges.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Leitrim County Council have refused to pay the sum of £34 14s. 9d. demanded by the Inspector-General as a moiety of the cost of extra police sent to the vicinity of Ballinaglera to protect T. Brady during the period ending 30th September, 1906; whether a further expense of the same nature has since been incurred, and is still going on; and what steps are to be taken to enforce the demand.

MR. BIRRELL: The Answer to the first two inquiries is in the affirmative. The statutory certificate, the issue of which is a preliminary step for the recovery of the debt, has been forwarded to the county council, and no further action can be taken in the matter until after the next meeting of the council, on 15th May.

*MR. DOLAN: Has not this man for whom this protection was provided been prosecuted for by the constable protecting him, and did not he and the constable protecting him, after knocking an old man down, drive away without assisting him?

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

River Deel Salmon Fisheries.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a weir has been erected on the River Deel, near Askeaton, in the county of Limerick, which is a bar to the salmon coming up the river in the spring season owing to the fact that there is a vacuum between the wall and the water flowing over the weir, in consequence of which the fish stay in the reaches of the river below the weir, thereby creating a valuable private interest in the river there; and whether, in the public interest, he will cause an inquiry to be made into this matter, with the view to having a queen's gap made in the weir to facilitate the passage of the fish up the river.

MR. BIRRELL: I understand that the circumstances are practically as stated in the Question. The Department will see what can be done to facilitate the ascent of salmon over the weir.

Feale Fishery.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the decrease in the number of fish in the Feale is due to the erection of a weir perpendicular to the bed of the river at Listowel in which the conservators of the time failed to have inserted a fish gap to facilitate the passage of the fish to the upper waters, and not to any other cause; and whether, having regard to this fact, he will take steps to have the matter investigated so that a queen's gap may be made in the weir to enable the fish to go without difficulty up the river.

MR. BIRRELL: The Department inform me that a fish pass has recently been constructed in the weir in question. The Department assisted financially and with professional advice.

Maigne Fishery.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that net fishermen in a reserved part of the Maigne to which they have the right to fish from custom, near Adare, in the county of Limerick, are under a by-law made some time ago confined to fishing from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the fishing season, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, and that, in consequence, if the fishermen remain fishing at the extreme end of this reserve until the allowed time in the evenings they cannot bring back their net in the boat; and whether owing to the hardship of this regulation under which the men must bring back the net on their shoulders along the river bank, a distance of three miles, he will take steps to see that they may be allowed to return to the landing place with their net in the boat.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that the restrictions imposed by the by-law are as described in the Question. The Department will consult the Board of Conservators with regard to the disadvantage under which the fishermen are said to labour in getting home their nets.

Gortnahoe Evicted Tenants.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say what action has been taken by the Estates Commissioners to bring about the reinstatement of Michael Dillon, evicted tenant, on the estate of Lord Clonmell at Lisduff, Gortnahoe, Thurles, county Tipperary: and whether they will refuse to sanction the sale of the estate until he is put back again in his holding.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have referred the application of Michael Dillon, with others, to an inspector for inquiry. On receipt of his report on this application they will consider what action, if any, they will take in the matter.

Mr. KENDAL O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the inspector of the Estates Commissioners has yet reported in the case of Phillip McDonnell, evicted tenant on the property of Admiral Sir Edward Poë, in the parish of Grange, Gortnahoe, near Thurles, in the county of Tipperary; if so, what is the nature of the report; and whether the Commissioners have yet taken any steps to bring about his reinstatement.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have received the report of their inspector on this case and will consider it in due course. These reports are confidential documents prepared for the use of the Commissioners.

River Feale Fishing Season.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the fishery department of the Agricultural Board have not for some years opened the fishing season in the upper waters of the River Feale, near Abbeyfeale, in the county of Limerick, until the 1st May, thereby causing dissatisfaction amongst anglers of the district at this action in destroying sport; and whether he will take steps to see that the fishing season there is opened at an early date.

Mr. BIRRELL: I am not informed as to the facts of this particular case, but I am aware that it is considered that alterations of the close season are desirable in several cases. The power to hold inquiries on the question of changing close seasons is vested in the Department of Agriculture, but pending an alteration of the law, they cannot resume holding these inquiries, which have been suspended for some years. The question of introducing legislation on this subject is under my consideration, but I am not in a position to announce a decision.

Galway Ferries.

Mr. GWYNN (Galway): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the proposed Bill for extending the county council's powers of raising and expending money will include a clause enabling them to establish and maintain ferries; whether his attention has been called to the inconvenience occasioned to the county of Galway by the operation of the existing limitations; and at what date he hopes to succeed in passing his Bill into law.

Mr. BIRRELL: The question of introducing into the proposed Bill such a clause as the hon. Member desires is under consideration. I am aware that the Galway County Council are desirous of obtaining power to provide and work a ferry over Lough Corrib. I hope to introduce the Bill referred to at an early date, but its progress will, of course, depend upon the state of public business generally.

Irish Police Reports.

Mr. FELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will ascertain whether any instructions or suggestions, verbal or written, have been given to the Royal Irish Constabulary to the effect that they are to discontinue sending to the Chief Secretary full reports of boycotting, intimidation, and other disorders; and whether he can give an assurance that the receipt of such full reports from district inspectors and others will be welcomed by him.

Mr. BIRRELL: The suggestion contained in the first part of this Question is entirely without foundation. Reports of the nature referred to are made to me as of course when occasion arises; but the hon. Member can hardly expect me to say that I welcome the receipt of such reports.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: Will the right hon. Gentleman suggest to the Home Secretary that he ask the Chief Constable of Great Yarmouth for a report on all cases of bribery and corruption occurring in that borough?

[No Answer was returned.]

Dublin Technical College.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a resolution of the Donegal County Council, protesting against the Technical College in Dublin being built with imported stone; whether proposals are being made to build the superstructure with Portland stone, discarding the Irish stone at the quarries, Mountcharles, county Donegal, said by experts to be superior; and whether he will take steps to have the contract thrown open to competition of Irish stone only.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have not seen the resolution referred to, but in any case I can add nothing to the reply given by my predecessor on the 7th November last to the hon. Member for East Clare.†

Attacks on Irish Postmen.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that on the 19th instant, close to the Ballinagleragh estate, county Leitrim, a rural postman was set upon by men whose faces were blackened and who were otherwise disguised, and a number of registered letters stolen from his bag; and whether any arrests have been effected in connection with the outrage.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The matter to which the hon. and gallant Member refers has already been reported to me. No arrest has yet been reported to me.

MR. LONSDALE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that on the 19th instant another postman was robbed of registered letters, and that on the following day in the same locality a post boy who had succeeded in delivering such letters was savagely attacked by a mob and only rescued from serious injury by the police with great difficulty?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The matter is being inquired into.

MR. MOORE: Will the right hon. Gentleman ask for police protection for these postmen?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That is not in my Department.

MR. LONSDALE asked as to a robbery of mails at Macroom.

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of the Question.

Irish Policy of the Government.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce their Home Rule Bill or the measure dealing with university education in Ireland before Easter.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E. R., Holderness): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, may I ask him whether, after the result of the Brigg election, he will not think it advisable to postpone these Bills altogether.

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not seem to be relevant to the question of university education in Ireland.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): No, Sir, the Irish legislation of the Government—which, I suppose, is what the hon. and gallant Member refers to—will not be introduced before Easter.

Cape Government and Colonial Preference.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the declaration of the Cape Government that the continuance of preferential treatment to the producers and manufacturers of Great Britain is largely dependent upon the granting of some reciprocal privileges to British Colonies; and whether, in view thereof, he will see his way to give consideration to the views of the Cape Government at the forthcoming Colonial Conference.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think the terms of the Resolution of the Cape Government, the effect of which the hon. Member has correctly stated, are such as to call for any declaration from His Majesty's Government. Of course the opinions of any Colony on any question will receive attention.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: May I ask whether our representative at the Conference will be instructed to keep an open mind on the subject?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Our representative at the Conference will, I suppose, be the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and he will, no doubt, be fully acquainted with the opinions and feeling of the Government on the subject.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxiv., 565.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) asked whether the Prime Minister was aware that it had been indicated to the House that the Government did not go into the Conference with their mind open, and whether they might take it that the door was at least ajar on this subject.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think there can be any doubt as to the general opinions on this subject of His Majesty's Government.

Small Holdings Bill.

MR. CORRIE GRANT (Warwickshire, Rugby): I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the Small Holdings Bill, promised in His Majesty's gracious Speech, will be introduced; and whether it will be first introduced in this House or elsewhere.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, Sir, it is too early for me to give my hon. friend any information about this Bill, which I expect will be introduced in this House.

The Wreck of the "Berlin."

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the name of Captain Sperling will be included in the list of those whom the Government intend to recognise in connection with the "Berlin" disaster.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Certainly, Sir, of course. When I used the phrase "lifeboat crews" I was quoting from a document which was written before the gallant action of Captain Sperling was known, at any rate in any detail, in this country. All who have taken part in the work of rescue will be recognised.

SELECTION.

Ordered, That Mr. Eugene Wason be discharged from the Committee and that Mr. Crombie be added.—(*Sir William Brampton Gurdon.*)

NEW BILLS.

PROBATION OF OFFENDERS BILL.

"To permit the release of Offenders on Probation in certain cases," presented by Mr. Secretary Gladstone; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 75.]

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To provide for the later opening in the morning of premises licensed for the Sale of Excisable Liquors in Scotland," presented by Mr. Findlay; supported by Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Robert Balfour, Mr. Cross, Mr. Gulland, Mr. McCallum, Mr. Sutherland, and Mr. Wilkie; to be read a second time upon Friday 26th April, and to be printed. [Bill 76.]

CLERKS OF THE PEACE AND COUNTY COUNCIL BILL.

"To amend the Law with regard to Clerks of the Peace and Clerks of the County Council," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Sir John Kennaway, Sir Francis Channing, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, and Sir Walter Foster; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 77.]

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

"To amend the Law in regard to the appointment of Justices of the Peace," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Sir Francis Channing, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Corrie Grant, Sir William Brampton Gurdon, and Mr. A. Edward Dunn; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 78.]

SPURIOUS SPORTS BILL.

"To prohibit the hunting, coursing, and shooting of animals kept in confinement," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Mr. Corrie Grant, Mr. George Greenwood, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr. Cameron Corbett; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 79.]

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 190,000, all ranks, be maintained for the service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding His Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908."

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover) said that hon. Members had had the best part of two days to think over the notable speech delivered by the Secretary of State for War on Monday, to read it in cold print, and to study the various memoranda with which he had supplemented that ample but not too ample statement. Those who had devoted the interim to that purpose would agree with him that they must advance somewhat cautiously along the road which the right hon. Gentleman had traced out for them. They must take all military precautions, and they must reconnoitre the ground which the right hon. Gentleman had invited them to occupy. He would abstain at that stage from dealing with the multiplicity of detail embraced in the right hon. Gentleman's proposals. He doubted whether a far more prolonged period of consideration than they had had would fit the House to pronounce a judgment upon the details of military strategy and the economics of military administration which were contained in these vast and ample proposals. But the House was qualified to act as the guardians of the safety of the Empire and the guardians of the public purse. It was in that capacity he asked hon. Members to approach the whole scheme. They knew what was wanted. We wanted an Army suited to the needs of this Empire, which were unlike the military needs of any other country, and we wanted it at a price we could afford to pay. It must be a price which would not arrest our development in peace or depress our credit in time of war. Many people could give us a better Army which would cost more, and any one could, he supposed, give us a worse army that would cost less. What we wanted was a better Army at a cheaper price. He proposed on that occasion to apply that test and ask *seriatim* these questions. Was the Army proposed by the right hon. Gentleman better and was it cheaper in respect of three things? Was it better suited to meet our normal exigencies in time of peace, was it better suited to meet the exigencies in the first phase of a great war, and was it better suited to meet the exigencies of the succeeding stages of a great war? Let them deal with the normal exigencies of peace. The question he wished to ask was this: Under the right hon. Gentleman's scheme would the regular Army of white troops serving with the colours in times of peace—he was not talking of the Reserves, of the special contingent, but of the white soldiers serving with the colours—would they be better and cheaper? He thought it was hardly possible that it would be better or much cheaper so long as the right hon. Gentleman retained the "truncated Cardwellian" system. It was not for him to criticise that system nor was it any part of his duty to suggest alternatives to the plan. The right hon. Gentleman had not given the Cardwellian system that complete trial which should be given to any theory before any final opinion was pronounced upon it. The right hon. Gentleman was having a battalion at home to correspond with one abroad in theory but not in practice. He noticed that, while retaining a full system of linked battalions, the right hon. Gentleman was driven like all his predecessors to expedients. He had been driven to send a battalion of Guards to Egypt which had nothing to do with the normal exigencies of peace. He had been driven, whilst abolishing eight battalions stationed abroad, so to increase the numbers in the battalions left abroad, that the abolition did very little to relieve the strain upon the battalions stationed at home. Of the regular white Army, the right hon. Gentleman had effected a reduction of only some 10,000 men and a reduction of only 1,300 white men serving with the colours abroad. Therefore, under his new scheme, that part of this Army was not better, but a little worse off. Was that going to make the Army appreciably cheaper? The right hon. Gentleman speaking on Monday last had said that £250,000 of his reduction was due to the reduction in the line battalions which took place last summer—less than £250,000 of the £2,000,000 of which they had heard so much.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Less than £500,000.

MR. WYNDHAM said the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the rest of the surplus was due to the fact that this was a soldiers' budget. It turned out that by a "soldiers' budget" the right hon. Gentleman meant a budget in which the soldiers had discontinued a practice which they observed last year. He had said that soldiers were in the habit of loading the Estimates by putting in larger sums for particular services than, as a matter of fact, were really required, in the hope that they would eventually get whatever was necessary. That might have been the right hon. Gentleman's experience, but it was not his own. It was the practice before the appointment of the Committee on which the late Lord Randolph Churchill played so remarkable a part, but his own experience was that the system had fallen into desuetude, and if it had come into fashion again to such an extent that it accounted for this enormous reduction he could only assume that the soldiers were a little more afraid of this Government than they were of the last. But the Army was not going to cost £2,000,000 less; as a matter of fact the service during the past year had not cost nearly so much as the right hon. Gentleman had told them it would cost. In this reduction of £2,000,000 no argument was to be found for believing that the new policy of the right hon. Gentleman was cheaper than the scheme which preceded it.

MR. HALDANE: If the right hon. Gentleman will take the automatic increases of the last two years he will find they will just wipe out the savings of unspent money.

MR. WYNDHAM said there always had been and always would be automatic increases. He could not remember Army Estimates without automatic increases.

They could only look to the reduction and trace that reduction to its origin. When they had done this, they then found that it was not due to any change in plan with regard to this part of the Army, but to a decrease of expenditure on transports and remounts, under Vote 6; supplies, clothing, and horses under Vote 7; general stores under Vote 8, and armaments under Vote 9. A reduction of £1,601,000 could be traced to these four Votes. He was not attacking the right hon. Gentleman, but he was only trying to trace the origin of these reductions. The statement made by the right hon. Gentleman on Monday evening and repeated to-day that only less than £500,000 sterling of this reduction could be traced to the reduction of the *personnel* was in apparent conflict with the statement in the memorandum published with the Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman in his memorandum stated that the reduction of cost due to reducing the *personnel* amounted to over £1,000,000. The Estimates showed that £1,600,000 more was due to the depletion of stores, and under Votes 6, 7, 8, and 9. However reasonable the right hon. Gentleman's schemes for the future might be, the House of Commons was specially charged with looking into the Estimates and deriving its information from the Estimates. Until the right hon. Gentleman could show that the changes he proposed to make in the Regular Army would give us in this and succeeding years any real substantial reduction, it was justifiable to say that this part of the Army which provided the garrisons for India and the Colonies was not better, but rather worse, and was not appreciably cheaper. It was not much cheaper, but was it any better? Was it any better for finding reliefs for the battalions abroad? Where were we to find relief for the regiments abroad with only seventy battalions at home? The right hon. Gentleman would be faced with the old familiar difficulty of finding these drafts, for there was nothing in the scheme likely to attract recruits. Under the new scheme the right hon. Gentleman was going to knock thirty men off every battalion at home. That was directly contrary to the advice which was tendered to the late Government.

MR. HALDANE: It is the establishment we have reduced—not the men. The three years system will leave us short of the establishment for some time.

MR. WYNDHAM said the establishment represented what their military advisers thought necessary in order that there should be soldiers to be drilled for battalions at home. The right hon. Gentleman in saying that the reduction of thirty men in every battalion at home would not injure these battalions was not using language which could be readily understood by those familiar with the problem. Every battalion at home suffered depletion on account of recruits not fit to drill with the regiment and other men being taken away for fatigue duty.

MR. HALDANE: Your three years system caused the difficulty.

MR. WYNDHAM said he could not follow that. If the right hon. Gentleman meant that the three years system had emptied the battalions at home, it was most surprising, because the previous Government found the three years enlistment more popular than the seven years. In respect of reliefs, in respect of recruits, in respect of drafts, and in respect of training the new scheme was no improvement. That was his first and a legitimate point. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that no one would be more delighted than he if they could get all the right hon. Gentleman expected under his scheme. He felt it his duty to apply this test to the Regular Army and also to the Auxiliary Forces in the country. He had in a dual capacity a duty to discharge—his duty to the men whom he commanded and his duty to see that the House and the country understood the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman before they were finally committed to it. Then let them apply another test. Was the new plan better and cheaper than the old plan for the exigencies of the first phase of a war? No war could be concluded if we relied only upon defence and were unable to plant a decisive blow. It would be folly to spend the money we did on our Navy if war meant a war to which there would be no end. It would be economical, if we relied upon the Navy as the first defence, to have an Army that would prevent foreign Powers from believing this country weaker than it actually was, and attempting a course of diplomacy which might result in war; and if war came it would enable us to bring that war to a conclusion by some other means than that of a disastrous and dishonourable peace. Therefore, the need of having an ample striking force for the first phase of a war was most important. The right hon. Gentleman harped too much upon the ammunition columns of his artillery. He made the right hon. Gentleman a present of them, although ammunition columns were no new thing. It was quite true that artillery could not be mobilised unless the ammunition columns were larger than before rapid firing was developed; but that could not be made a reproach to those who added new artillery and howitzers, and preceded the right hon. Gentleman in the path which he intended to pursue. The right hon. Gentleman was probably aware that since 1899 each Government had aimed at sending nine divisions of two brigades into the field at the outbreak of a war. The right hon. Gentleman proposed six divisions of three brigades each. That was the same thing; nine times two were eighteen, and six times three were eighteen. The right hon. Gentleman talked much of his ammunition columns, but every modern army now had a larger proportion of artillery. The right hon. Gentleman exclaimed that by his plan he would be able to put 160,000 men into the field, and had said, truly, that that had never been contemplated before the South African war. If, however, the Committee would throw their minds back to the months at the end of 1899 and the beginning of 1900, they would find that in size and composition this new force was not very dissimilar from the force which actually was sent out to South Africa, and which was derided, in spite of its size, because it was made up of Militiamen as well as Regulars. He might say, in parenthesis, that, of course, in the years since the war great improvements had been made by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessors, and by the right hon. Gentleman. The system which existed in 1899, which nobody defended, did, however, succeed, in excess of anything that had been contemplated, in placing a very considerable number of men at a great distance from this country. And when it was seen that that force must be expanded it was expanded. The force embarked, curiously enough, was almost the same size as the right hon. Gentleman's expeditionary force—168,840 men. It was criticised because it was made up in part of Militiamen, of Reservists, of Yeomanry, and of Regulars with the colours. But was the new expeditionary force to be made up of different materials? Was it a change, a revolution? Had the right hon. Gentleman got, or was he seeking, any more material than his predecessors? No, he was taking the old material and calling it by other names. Was his force going to be of a less composite character, was it going to leave less confusion at home when it had been despatched? He thought not. When the right hon. Gentleman's force left England for the first phase of a great war he would leave at home 76,000 Regulars and 45,000 of the old reserve —121,000 men in all. When during the last days of the South African war only some 107,000 Regulars and old Reservists were left at home, it was said, and said truly, that there were then no *cadres* in which they could be conveniently embodied. Would it be better now? What *cadres* would there be at home in which they could be trained by officers with some experience belonging to the Regular Army? Into the narrow compass of thirty-three gun batteries, on a two-gun establishment, which had been occupied in teaching the territorial Army the elements of an artilleryman's work, of two cavalry regiments, and seven infantry battalions, they would have to pour these 121,000 Regular soldiers who were left behind. Would those be ideal *cadres* for that purpose? He thought not. The right hon. Gentleman would say that he was omitting the seventy-four new third battalions. These were the pivot of the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme, and if that part of the scheme was unsound the rest might be admirable, but the scheme was bound to fail. Even in the admirable report of the right hon. Gentleman's speech in *The Times*, this pivot of the whole plan appeared in a paragraph under the head of "Supply of Drafts." Nobody would suppose that here was the kernel and heart of the whole matter. What were these seventy-four new third battalions? So far as he could make out they were the old small depots whose local habitation consisted largely of condemned barracks. He knew what he was speaking of, having been chairman of the Committee which examined into the value of these depots. That Committee found that the value of these depots was very slight, and that in any new scheme they would have to sell the bulk of the structures at scrap prices and begin again. If these seventy-four battalions which enabled the right hon. Gentleman to send out his expeditionary force, and which alone supplied any centres to deal with the confusion of leaving 121,000 soldiers behind, were to be equal to that great task, this scheme was going to cost a very large sum of money indeed. Here again, they found what he called truncated Cardwellism. The right hon. Gentleman had gone back 100 years to the seed and origin of the Cardwell system, of which these depots which had been neglected for years were a part. Mr. Cardwell took the idea from Mr. Pitt, under whose Government it had been carried out, to a certain extent, in 1806. At that time it was described by the secretary to the then Commander-in Chief, in words which he could not better in order to describe what these seventy-four battalions must be like.

> "As there was much reason to apprehend that a great proportion of the numbers raised would not be fit for active service, a divisional battalion under the name of the battalion of reserve was formed, and appropriated for the reception of all the overplus men, together with those who, from their age or size, were not judged capable of active service."

Such was the overplus which these depots were now to receive. What had been the main criticism of the Militia? That its recruits consisted largely of lads who had got into trouble, who were unhappy at home, who were poor and were in want of a meal, and who would like to become soldiers, but were rejected at the depot, afterwards enlisting in the Militia. Those who were not fit for the two-line battalions were to be enlisted in the special contingent. He doubted whether this plan for meeting the exigencies of the first phase of a war was really appreciably better than we had now. The right hon. Gentleman must either perfect the system under which they had organised the Army, or make the depots realities, real centres from which military enthusiasm could be radiated into the Militia, or we must adopt a totally different system.

MR. HALDANE said that he had pointed out explicitly in respect of mobilisation that the overplus of men would not go to the depots, but to the barracks of the Regular Army who had gone to the front.

MR. WYNDHAM said that that was exactly what happened during the South African war, and it was a subject of unmeasured criticism; and he asked whether relatively it was much better or cheaper than the scheme we had at present? These depots would not be any better unless the Government spent money on them, and then they would be dearer. The worst class of Militia recruit would go into this special contingent, and something that was obtainable from the officers of the Militia would be lost. Everyone knew that there were many officers in the Militia who were doing a great service to their country, and if they looked at this scheme they must find that these officers would be prohibited from doing that service which they were qualified to perform. Much of the patriotism of these officers, therefore, would be lost to the State. Much of the local patriotism which existed in the Militia might conceivably have been developed. He agreed that the Militia as it existed was an indefensible body, but he doubted whether this special contingent was going to be much better than the Militia, and he was sure that it would lack some things which the existing Militia possessed. Then, was this force going to be much cheaper? Apparently it was going to be rather cheaper. A militiaman now cost a little over £20 a year per effective. The new article was going to cost £18 15s.; but he doubted whether this cheapness would be effective economically. The old Reservist, who proved his excellence in the last war, cost per man £10 8s. 10d. Would anyone argue that this new special contingent ought to cost well over £18 if the old Reservists only cost £10? But was it better or cheaper in respect of the later phases of war? As he understood the scheme the Militia had gone, and had become the special contingent which was to serve in the first phase of a war and then to supply Militia drafts. The Militia, therefore, would not be available for the very useful service, as during the last war, of taking the place of the Regular troops in the Mediterranean garrisons. He did not see any provision in the scheme for them. There would be no Militiamen for that service, and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would explain more fully his proposals or repeat what he said, for he had failed to grasp the point in the course of a very long speech. In other wars the Militia were found to be admirably suited to that duty. The right hon. Gentleman would have 121,000 Regulars and Reservists to deal with in empty barracks as best he could, and he thought there would be the old confusion. He saw very little which led him to believe that the right hon. Gentleman would get rid of that confusion. In the present organisation of the Army we had tactical generals commanding Regulars and administrative generals in the same area; and now we were to have fourteen divisional generals, also Regular soldiers, commanding a new territorial Army. When that complex staff had to deal with all those left behind in a war and with the men obtained, he thought that the confusion would be greater and not less than in 1900. The right hon. Gentleman would allow the new territorial Army to volunteer piece-meal. He remembered the efforts made by Lord Lansdowne to prevent Yeomen starting out for South Africa before there were horses and equipment for them. Such a storm of patriotism had arisen throughout the country that it seemed as if any War Minister would be hanged at a lamp-post who refused to allow men to embark who were clamouring to go to the front. If the right hon. Gentleman had some proportion of these men who had assembled and said that they were dying to go the front, no doubt he would be unable to resist their appeal. The right hon. Gentleman hoped that these men might go in units, but he was not confident. They would have Volunteers coming on before they had provided any thoroughly scientific scheme to carry out that purpose. In this territorial Army there was not to be any Regular adjutant, but unless they provided an adjutant he did not believe that these men would be trained at all. The right hon. Gentleman would have to give the Committee a great deal of encouragement, and would have to carry a great deal of conviction to their minds before they took the leap in the dark to which he had invited them. The two essential changes that touched this part of the scheme were that the Yeoman was going to be deprived of a great deal of his pay, and the Volunteers were going to be given terms of enlistment which the Committee had no reason to believe at present were acceptable to them. He hoped that if this scheme passed it would succeed. He promised to do his best with his own Yeomen, and he would make speeches and give advice to the Volunteers. But why should they ignore the effect of local patriotism? The Yeoman farmer was a local man who could be got to take more stringent terms of enlistment to serve for a longer period; but this end could not be attained if the right hon. Gentlemen asked him to do more for less money. It was not in human nature to concede that. Then as to the Volunteers who were to be the substance of the new territorial Army. They did not care so much about a private's pay as about—many of them being artisans, and often migratory artisans — learning to shoot and to drill in circumstances which did not contravene the necessities of their avocations. One part of the Auxiliary Forces were those who had mind to their pay; the other portion were those who had a mind to their liberty. The Volunteer, who was intelligent, and would make a good infantry man, would cost £6 10s.; the private of the new territorial Army was going to cost £14 9s. They could not, by merely saying that the Yeomanry, the Militia and the Volunteers were to be merged, make them one. They were very dissimilar. He found very little comfort in the other part of the picture of the right hon. Gentleman—he was well aware that he did not represent the great body of opinion, which was probably far more weighty and valuable than his own opinion—in the fact that the artillery, transport, medical corps, telegraph companies, and all the adjuncts of an Army in the field in time of peace were to be attached to the new territorial Army. The tendency of modern military science was to separate the infantry from other arms of the service. The infantry won battles; the other arms prepared the way for them or followed them up to victory, or minimised the consequences of defeat; and the transport and other services were to keep the Army in the field. But the tendency of modern warfare was that the Commander-in-Chief, having these services, should apportion them to the infantry where they were wanted, and in the proportions in which they were wanted. He did not believe that they were taking so effective or so important a step towards complete organisation as to out-weigh the defects of the scheme for proportioning all these auxiliary services in time of peace. His view might be doubted in respect of transport and other services, but would anybody doubt it in respect of artillery? The territorial Army existed, after an expeditionary force had left our shores, to repel raids, or, at least, to be an insurance against raids. Unless it were a sound insurance it would be worth nothing. A raid would be attempted, if another Power believed that the insurance was unsound. By what troops would it be attempted? By the picked troops of a Continental Army. By what artillery would it be attempted? By the picked artillery of a Continental Army. They could not settle the problem by saying that three batteries of the new territorial Army would be as good as one of those picked batteries. These batteries would be made up of men taught in the schools of the thirty-three 2-gun batteries with guns of old pattern. Not three of them, not five, not ten of them could confidently be stated to be the equivalent of one picked battery of the best artillery of the best Continental Army; they would not get into position at all. If a raiding force landed, the first thing they would do would be to take up an artillery position, and he thought that the artillery arm under the right hon. Gentleman's scheme would experience considerable difficulty in discovering, at eight or ten thousand yards, the position taken up by the raiders. As to the rest of the adjuncts of the territorial Army, he agreed that they should be taken in their order of urgency; but the artillery, if it was to be of value at all, must be as good as the artillery of the Regular Army. He might, perhaps, hesitate to say whether or not it was wise to have two lines at all for the artillery; but, looking forward to the strain of a prolonged war, the artillery arm of the territorial Army in order to be of any value, must be kept to the level of the artillery of the field force in time of war, and used for instructional purposes in time of peace. No national Army could be created by effecting changes, however great, in the pay and terms of enlistment of the

Auxiliary Forces, and then calling it a national Army because in form it was a colourable imitation of some Continental model. We had to express the national genius of our own nation, which was rather conservative, timid of transitional periods, and wedded to old ways; and unless the right hon. Gentleman could really convince them, not as a certainty, but as a huge probability, that the scheme would produce an expeditionary Force of 160,000 men and a territorial Army of 300,000, he doubted whether it would be possible to induce the House and the country to accept it. We had got to adapt the national genius to the particular configuration of a problem peculiar to ourselves, and to the eternal truths of the science of war. He doubted whether under the right hon. Gentleman's scheme the Regular Army would be better adapted to normal peace exigencies, though no doubt it would be somewhat better adapted to the first stage of a great war; and he was by no means convinced that a non-Regular territorial Army, would, under this scheme, ever reach the standard that it must reach if it was to meet in the field the troops it might have to confront in the event of that last, and, he hoped, most remote contingency which they had to take into account.

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said the Committee had listened with great interest to the right hon. Gentleman who for some time represented the War Office in this House, and who was the only one who had escaped from that office with credit to himself and the good wishes both of the officers and men, and of Members of the House of Commons. ["No, no."] Well, he would say that the right hon. Gentleman was the one who had escaped from that office with the highest measure of approval. No doubt it was because he was anxious not to condemn the whole scheme which none of them yet fully understood, but the right hon. Gentleman had touched more upon the fringes and interstices than upon the main outline put before them two days ago. He agreed entirely that they could not do everything at once; but there was no reason why they should not lay down some sound general principles, and proceed as fast as they could. Last year he moved, with the support of many Members belonging to all political Parties, that this year's Estimates should show a reduction of 10,000 men, and of at least a million and a quarter of money. That did not meet with general support, and so they were forced to proceed to a division. This year they had, instead, a reduction of 16,600 men, and £2,600,000. It would be churlish, therefore, to renew their attack, or to claim a victory. All they could do was to say that they were glad that their views on that matter had been accepted, and that the right hon. Gentleman had made a reduction, although not exactly in the way many of them had suggested. He and his friends believed that it would be a mistake to keep a great body of Regular troops in this country. They believed that what was wrongly called the Cardwell system—that they must keep as many men at home as abroad—was not founded on the true requirements of our strategic position. Last year the Leader of the Opposition voted against them because, he said, if they proposed to abandon the Cardwell system they must show something to put in its place. His right hon. friend had done that and proposed to make a real Army of the many heterogeneous units now composing our Auxiliary Forces. The broad lines laid down by the right hon. Gentleman were that the Regular Army was an expeditionary foreign service Army, and that the defence of this country from invasion, whether likely or unlikely, possible or impossible, must devolve upon the citizens of this country; it was wasteful to use foreign service troops to garrison Great Britain. His right hon. friend said that they needed a field force and a Home force, and they should be distinct. For that purpose, he proposed to arrange that the Regular troops in this country should be ready to proceed, with little or no delay, to the seat of war across the seas. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover made a great point of the fact that in the South African war a force as large as that which his right hon. friend proposed was sent to the war. Yes, but after what interval of time? It took them months, long after the need was known, to send out anything that could be called an army to the seat of war. If the proposals which had been laid before the House for organising those six divisions were carried out he believed we should have a much larger expeditionary force than we had ever had before. He did not say that that would be wise, because he thought it was still too big, but as long as we adhered to the Cardwell system we should have to keep a large number of men in this country, and while we had them here we might just as well organise them to go oversea. We had now arrived at a kind of Cowper-Templeism in the Army system. When they had got something in place of the present system, many of them would press that we should not keep so large an expeditionary force, on the ground that, whatever the dangers of reductions, the cogent arguments as to national credit advanced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite more than outweighed the necessities of spending so large a sum of money on the expeditionary force. He agreed with the Member for Dover that there were dangers in these seventy-four battalions. If they were to make a complete short service Army, such as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon proposed, he agreed it would be a false step, but he did not understand the proposals of the Secretary of State for War to amount to that. If the short service Army was allowed to grow it would undoubtedly greatly increase the difficulty of finding employment for the old soldier, and it would take men away just at the moment when they ought to be learning a trade. There was also the military objection that it would smash the territorial Army. He did not believe it was proposed to make a short service system, but simply to constitute a kind of bridge to carry us over that moment when the six divisions would have left, when the territorial force was still embodied and some men were left behind because of their immature age, and when others must be enlisted to fill up the casualties. That seemed to be the purpose of the scheme, and so long as that was clearly kept in view it could not give cause for any real hostility. He believed that there was a possibility of agreement between both sides of the House for this year in regard to the proposals of his right hon. friend as applied to the Regular Army, and he believed that what had been proposed was sound, with the one caveat he had entered in regard to the Cardwell system. He thought the principle laid down as the basis of the territorial force would meet with general acceptance. There were to be two lines. There would be the foreign service line of men who would not be enlisted in such great numbers, who would make the Army their life career. He hoped further efforts would be made to find employment for them in after life. The second line would be similar to the Volunteers and the Yeomanry; they would be civilians first and soldiers afterwards. It had been clearly laid down that these two lines of one Army should be distinct; one was to reinforce the Army abroad and the other was to defend this country, and perhaps in the last resort to form the nucleus of a nation fighting for its life. The first thing necessary was that the men should be organised in divisions. But although the divisional organisation might not be perfect they must have all three arms in the Auxiliary forces. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had complained of the proposition to form Volunteer artillery. Surely he had not forgotten that our experience in the recent war was that the power of shooting well with guns was not confined to Regular arms. This fact had been demonstrated in every war in which troops formed on a national basis had been engaged against a Regular Army. In artillery, above all things, the most amazing skill and courage had been developed by what he might call a national Army. It was well-known that the gunners who served the Japanese guns in Manchuria had had far less training than the Russian gunners who were opposed to them. Possibly his right hon. friend would be able to elucidate some of these points. From inquiries he had made there was a very good field for the development of a Volunteer artillery. The divisional organisation with cavalry, gunners, and infantry seemed to be a good sound plan. He urged that the divisional generals should be appointed at once, because those who had had to do with military forces knew that one man could always do a thing better than a committee. One danger to which all great schemes of reorganisation of the Auxiliary forces were exposed was the attempt to give one man two functions. No man should have two functions at the same time; it only caused confusion both in peace and war. He hoped the Secretary of State for War would stick to the divisional organisation, and not give any man two functions. He thought there should also be a separate department at the War Office to deal with the territorial Army. The Norfolk Commission unanimously recommended it, and yet nothing was done. It was heartbreaking for those in command of the Auxiliary Forces to have to go through the interminable delays caused by the interference of the War Office, who could not possibly know anything whatever about the special needs of the Auxiliary Forces. They were apt to be very much misled by the advice of experts with regard to the enlistment and training, and certainly in regard to the clothing of the Volunteers. The soldier back from India, however distinguished, was not an expert in these matters. He was an amateur; he knew nothing of them. He would give one instance. The desire in regard to the Regular soldiers was to have as few married men as possible in the ranks of the Army, but the desire of everyone interested in the Auxiliary Forces was to have as many married men as possible in the territorial force. Experience showed that in the South African War the married man was as a rule more courageous than the unmarried man. He said that without suggesting any reason in the least, and without any personal reference to his right hon. friend. It was admitted also by the Japanese generals that they found the same remarkable fact in the recent war. The only reason why the military chiefs wanted to get rid of married men was that it was inconvenient to house the men in India, but that reason entirely disappeared when they were dealing with a territorial force. Only a small percentage of non-commissioned officers and none of the rank and file would receive separation allowances when the territorial force was called upon. As to the formation of county associations, he believed these bodies could do real good with the limited functions now assigned to them. He did not think it would have been wise to give them sole control of the Volunteers, Militia, and Yeomanry. But in connection with such matters as the provision of rifle ranges, and looking after what might be called the eleemosynary duties of the payment of separation allowances, the co-ordination of the various funds, and the finding of employment for Regular soldiers, he thought that good would be done. He was doubtful of the wisdom of making the Lord-Lieutenant *ex officio* the head of the county association. If the Lord-Lieutenant was suitable he would be always elected, but if he was not suitable it was not desirable that he should take the position *ex officio*. That was a detail which had better be discussed when the Bill was before the House. One of the main objections urged by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon against the Secretary of State for War's scheme was, that these men of the Territorial Army were not liable for service abroad. That was precisely why he and his friends supported the proposal. They believed that it was an added check on the power of the Executive when engaged in a war which it could not finish. Nothing was more dangerous than to give the War Office power to commence a war just because there was a large expeditionary force with considerable powers of expansion behind it. It was far safer that with a limited force they should have a patriotic, well armed, and well drilled body on the voluntary principle, who were themselves the judges as to whether they would prosecute the war or not. That was a profound principle not only of the Liberal Party but of the whole English nation, for which they had fought for the last 300 years. They could not expect any soldier at the War Office, who desired to have before him a plain picture showing the number of men who could be called upon, to accept that view. Another objection was that, after this territorial force had been trained for a week or a fortnight they would be no good. Somebody had said that any other troops would go through them like a knife through butter. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had said that they would be putting their money on the wrong horse, because in ninety-nine cases out of 100 they would be perfectly useless. Was that true? Was it borne out by history or facts?

*Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): The hon. and gallant Member has misrepresented me. I said that history showed that in ninety-nine cases out of 100 this force would be unavailable, because we fought abroad. I was not at that time talking of the quality of the force in any way.

Major SEELY: What was the right hon. Gentleman speaking about? Surely he could not be referring to the last war. Were they not available in the last war? Is that what he means?

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I said that in ninety-nine case out of 100 this force was not available except as Volunteers, and that I did not think it was a wise thing to organise the whole force for a purpose for which you did not intend to employ it.

Major SEELY said the right hon. Gentleman had modified the statement somewhat. On the Ministerial side they were determined to adhere to the principle that a great part of the force would exercise its free will—however irritating that might be to gentlemen at the War Office—as to whether they would go or not. If the right hon. Gentleman said they would not go in a just cause he said what was not the fact. A third of the Volunteer force volunteered to go to South Africa, although it had to be borne in mind that the War Office told them that only 10,000 would be allowed to go. They would always be willing to go in a just war. Were they a good force? Somebody had said that the state of the Volunteers was deplorable. He dissented from that view. Some of the Volunteers were magnificent material. Some of them were as good as the men in any of the Armies of the Continent. He instanced the 1st battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. There they had raised on the voluntary principle a double battalion with its own headquarters, drill halls, and rifle ranges provided at great expense. The men were the flower of the young men of the county. He had seen them march twenty-five miles without a man falling out, and that was as much as they could expect these troops to do. He had seen them again and again manœuvre with great skill and when it came to fighting would they run away? It was assumed that they would. Why should they? War was not an affair merely of character and courage; it was first of all an affair of courage and common sense. Yet they had been told that in ninety-nine cases out of 100 these troops would be useless.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I have never made that remark or anything else like it. The only person who made it was Colonel Pollock, and he made it under totally different circumstances.

Major SEELY said he did not wish to misrepresent the right hon. Gentleman. He was not referring to the speech which the right hon. Gentleman made the other night, nor was he referring to him at all. He was referring to the right hon. Gentleman's school of thought, but if he challenged him the House might be asked to look at the book which he had presented to the public where they would see a most scathing indictment of civilian soldiers. The right hon. Gentleman had said again and again that they could not face European troops. He dissented from that. He believed that they would face European troops and face them with success. It was said, "Oh, the Boer war was not a guide, because there you were fighting against people in their own country." We were fighting in our own territory in Natal. In courage and devotion to duty the Imperial Light Horse were every bit as good as any mounted corps in the British Army, and they did as well on the occasion of the South African War. He believed that it was possible to make an army of this kind effective for war. He would warn the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State against centralisation. He would say nothing as to the details of the scheme which the right hon. Gentleman adumbrated on Monday. As to the enforcement of the penalty of £5 for leaving before the completion of the period of service he thought it would be rash to go too fast in that respect. After all they should remember the fact that some people did not serve. It would be absurd that Smith who had evaded his obligation for two years should be able to laugh while Jones who had given of his time and leisure for two years was sent to prison because he could not serve a third year. That plainly was a difficulty and a danger which must be provided against. It was said that the Militia had been killed. That was because details which could have been much better done on the spot had been managed from a central office. When the Prussian Minister asked how this vast Metropolis with its 4,000,000 people was governed, Lord Palmerston was said to have replied: "Sir, by everyone minding his own business." He believed that was the proper way to approach the organisation of the Reserves. If they were to make the National Army Scheme a success it was absolutely necessary that some measure of agreement should be come to, not only between the Government and the Opposition, but with hon. Members on the Irish and Labour Benches. Otherwise the scheme was bound to fail, because it could not be carried out entirely before there was another swing of the political pendulum. Whatever they did, let them agree. Therefore, he appealed for some measure of unity in order to make this great force which did not seek aggression but only to make this country and its possessions beyond the seas secure.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) said he would like to assure the Secretary for War that he had no desire to criticise his scheme in anything like a factious spirit. Nobody would be more pleased than he if the right hon. Gentleman's scheme should turn out to be as workable in practice as it had been attractive in presentment. His right hon. friend the Member for Dover had dealt principally with the first line, or the Regular Army. He should devote himself to the second line, or what was called the Home Army. The scheme outlined by the right hon. Gentleman was extremely novel, striking and ingenious—on paper; but he was afraid that it would break down in practice on two essential points when tested by the realities of war. The net effect, so far as the Home Army was concerned, it appeared to him, would be not to tune up the Auxiliary Forces to a higher pitch than now, but to lower them to the level of the Volunteers. In that respect the right hon. Gentleman had perhaps shown a certain amount of political wisdom; because it would be more easy to abolish the Militia than to overstrain the Volunteers. He assumed, for purposes of argument, that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to put into effect the scheme he had presented to the House; but he thought he would be able to show that it was certain to break down on two essential points. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that three arms were necessary in the event of war; but the right hon. Gentleman need not have invoked the authority of the Army Council for that elementary fact. However, he was glad that the right hon. Gentleman had restated it, because he had made it quite clear that he realised that the Home Army must have a sufficient complement of all arms, and notably of artillery. As an ex-artilleryman with some experience, and one who had kept in contact with many scientific officers of that great regiment, he proposed to deal chiefly with that point. The right hon .Gentleman had said that in all such matters the soldiers must be the ultimate judges of military efficiency. There was in his mind very much doubt whether the right hon. Gentleman could produce any body of scientific and up-to-date officers in the Royal Regiment of Artillery who would confirm his statement that an efficient or even a tolerably efficient force of artillery could be formed under the conditions laid down by the War Office. The right hon. Gentleman was, it was true, confirmed in his plan by the opinion of the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division, who, however, was too apt to draw all his theories from his limited experience in the South African War in which he had taken a distinguished part. An inefficient field artillery was worse than none at all. It was very costly, and actually dangerous to the force which it accompanied. He wished to make clear to the Committee what the modern requirements of field artillery were. In the first place, the equipment was much more complicated now than it was a few years ago. They had quick-firing guns, with complicated machinery, range-finders, telescopic sights, etc., all of which required a much higher training than used to be the case. The hon. Member for Abercromby Division had told them about some artillery action in South Africa in which a single Boer artilleryman distinguished himself; but they were not considering the tactics of a single gun, but of great masses of artillery, which was a science quite apart from the mechanical skill of the men who worked the guns. Artillery firing now took place from concealed positions indirectly, by means of auxiliary marks, and it would be realised at once that a much higher standard of accuracy and of fire control was thus demanded than by the old system. A modern artillery unit had become as complicated and scientific as the artillery on board a battleship, and nothing but the most constant training and practice all the year round could give even fairly good results. Moreover, it was necessary to practice not only with a single gun, but with the battery and brigade, the tactics of manœuvring the guns and getting them into the right place being almost as important as the performances of the guns when they got there. How was it possible that even the rudiments of these requirements could be imparted in drill for fifteen days at the maximum and five days at the minimum with a wretched nucleus of a battery of two guns? In the first place they would have to teach the new artilleryman the elements of being a soldier, and after that was done, even if he was exceptionally intelligent, the remainder of the training would have to be devoted to teaching him the ordinary drill of loading and firing off the guns. That, however, was only the first rung of a very long ladder. They had also to be taught gun-laying, range-finding, signalling, driving, and numerous other qualifications necessary for modern artillery. He was discussing this point the other day with a very distinguished artillery officer, who told him that under the existing three years system of enlistment, the battery commanders had the greatest difficulty of making men efficient gunners in the three years before they were sent in to the Reserve. Another officer told him that even with exceptionally intelligent recruits, not 40 per cent. after two years training, could become experts in gun-laying, and range-finding. If that were so with men continuously trained all the year round, how was it possible to get decently trained men after the infinitely small amount of drill now proposed to be given them? The whole proposal was ludicrous. Another officer who had watched the war operations in Manchuria told him that in the case of the Japanese army the whole of the men who started out with the ammunition columns before a year passed were serving with the batteries. That was owing to the wastage of war. How could it be expected that the civilians with whom the right hon. Gentleman proposed to fill up the ammunition columns could take the place of the men who had disappeared owing to the wastage of war and become efficient in the fighting units? Apart from the technical qualifications to which he had referred, much more co-operation was now required between the different arms of the Service in the field. At Pieter's Hill the artillery in support of the infantry attack had to fire over the heads of the infantry to the last moment, and how could that be done, unless the artillery were not only highly expert, but kept an icy coolness? Otherwise they became a menace to their comrades of the infantry and might bring about disaster to their own side. How was it possible to gain a knowledge of the requirements of all the three arms in the time allowed by the new scheme? And what chance was there of these men being able to acquire the necessary discipline and *morale* which would enable them to preserve under the demoralising and hellish effect of modern artillery fire any scientific knowledge which they had acquired? Hon. Members who had had practical experience of modern artillery fire knew how horribly disturbing it was even to the strongest nerves. Again the supervision of semi-professional troops would necessarily throw an almost intolerable extra strain, which was already very great, on the General Staff. If the right hon. Gentleman proposed or suggested that unexperienced untrained artillery, armed with second class inefficient weapons, should stand up before Regular troops with first class artillery he was simply inviting them to be butchered. It was an old and fatal fallacy to suppose that untrained troops could be armed with inferior weapons. He would never forget what he saw in the Cuban Campaign in this regard. Magnificent Volunteers were sent out, Volunteers as good as any we could find in this country. It was thought wise that they should be armed with inferior and inefficient weapons. What was the result? These men who from the start found that they were outranged, and that they had inferior weapons, immediately lost their *morale*. If we were to have these untrained troops at all, it was absolutely necessary that they should have first class weapons, otherwise they would go into the fight beaten from the start. The right hon. Gentleman further assumed that this Home Army would not have to fight until it had been embodied for six months. He personally did not believe that it was possible to produce efficient artillery even in that time, but, even so, how could the right hon. Gentleman count on this Home Army enjoying a long period of training before it was called upon to fight. Could he persuade the enemy to wait; to agree to a sort of close time for the embryo British Army whilst in the chrysalis stage? [AN HON. MEMBER: What about the Navy?] An hon. Member said, "What about the Navy?" He only said that *if* this Army had to fight, *if* the enemy did attack, he would strike as unexpectedly and as swiftly as possible. If such a thing as a raid was possible it would surely take place in the early stages of the war before our Navy had been able to assert its overwhelming superiority and give us the command of the seas. He was perhaps more pessimistic than the hon. Member for the Abercromby Division, but he believed even if this Home Army did enjoy this period of six months unmolested for the purpose of its training, and if it sprang from the soil as strong and as numerous as it did from the right hon. Gentleman's dream, still it would be deficient in *morale*, training and efficiency. It would have to face war of the most bloody description if it had to fight at all, and yet it was to be prepared for this as light heartedly as if it were going for a picnic. He thought we were apt to form rather an exaggerated opinion of the reliability of an improvised and hastily organised force for the purpose of foreign war, and our falling into that error was largely the result of the war in South Africa. The hon. Member for the Abercromby Division seemed to resent the idea that the lessons of the South African War did not in all respects settle this problem, but he did not think there was much comparison between what took place in South Africa and what would take place if fighting picked European troops armed with the latest weapons. Those troops would penetrate and annihiliate our ametur line of defence. If this Home Army was to be relied upon to repel an invasion the least the right hon. Gentleman could do was to make it an efficient force, even if it was a small one. Let him level up the voluntary forces rather than level them down, and let him give them efficient artillery. He would be interested to see whether the right hon. Gentleman could produce expert artillery opinion to support his suggestion to give this Army second-class artillery. He could not do so. It would be wiser therefore to increase the regular artillery and to have a certain portion in reserve, if necessary for the purposes of this Home Army. There was another point on which the scheme was bound to break down, and that was the total absence of a sufficient quantity of trained officers, without which no army, not even the war hardened Japanese army, could keep the field as a fighting machine. The right hon. Gentleman said he was impressed with the need for more officers, yet he had only provided for the Home Army 206 officers, or one for every 1,500 men, and he was not even going to allow Regular adjutants for the various units. Apparently the Spectator Company was supposed to afford some idea of what could be done, but it must be remembered the result of that experiment was almost entirely due to the exceptional zeal and ability of Colonel Pollock and his non-commissioned officers. But in that case there was one trained officer to 100 men, whilst the right hon. Gentleman only proposed to have one officer for 1,500 men. If they were going to train this Home Army as the Spectator Company was trained they would require 3,000 Colonel Pollocks, and where were they going to find them?

Whilst, in conclusion, no one would be more pleased to see the right hon. Gentleman's scheme work than himself; while he wished it every success; and while they were all animated with the sole desire to improve the Forces, there seemed to him to be two vital defects, the lack of competent officers and the lack of tolerably efficient artillery. The whole scheme was bound to fail unless the right hon. Gentleman could devise some thorough-going remedy, and a thorough-going remedy was bound to be costly. Unless, however, these defects were remedied the whole of this Home Army which the right hon. Gentleman had described with such glowing enthusiasm and which looked so well on paper would collapse on the first shock of war like a child's house of cards.

*SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.) said he desired to make some observations from a somewhat different point of view from those which had just been addressed to the Committee. He desired to address himself to the Estimates and not to the right hon. Gentleman's scheme for reforming the Army. As to the number of men, he felt some disappointment that a larger reduction had not been made during the present year. The right hon. Gentleman must have been aware that at the time of the general election and for some time prior to it there was no subject that attracted so much attention or excited more enthusiasm than the promise that a Liberal Government would effect large reductions in naval and military expenditure. This was especially the case with respect to the Army. He was glad to find there was a reduction on this Vote of £2,000,000 in round numbers, but that was a very much smaller reduction than the country expected of the present Government. He found also that that reduction, according to the very candid admission of the right hon. Gentleman himself, was due to manipulating what might be called the fringe of the question. It was mainly due to the custom which prevailed in the permanent offices. There was nothing in this peculiar to the War Office. Those who like himself had been associated all their lives with the constitution of Government offices would know that it was their custom to over-estimate, and although he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon cutting down the over-estimates and upon having compelled his subordinates to unload their unnecessary cargoes, yet after all that was not the manner in which it was hoped the reduction of military expenditure would be effected. It appeared that of this £2,000,000 only £600,000 was due to a reduction of the establishment. He found that eight battalions had been abolished, four in South Africa, two in Malta, one in Gibraltar, and one in Ceylon. This was no doubt effected in communication with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and he thought the reductions were right, but he found there was still a large force in our Colonies, especially in South Africa, and he would like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to give the Committee any promise or pledge that he would consider whether the garrison in South Africa could not be further reduced. The force in South Africa was well over 16,000 at the present moment, and before the Boer War it was only 3,000. It was now proposed to retain permanently in South Africa a very large establishment of Regular troops, but he failed to see the reason for their retention. If it was intended to be a sort of check on the Boers who had been so lately fighting against us, and with regard to whom some apprehension might be felt, he could understand it. But there was no feeling of that kind. On the contrary it was felt that friend and foe were now welded in one, and that there was no internal danger from the Boer nation, to whom we had actually conceded responsible Government which had resulted in a Boer administration being established. In such circumstances it seemed wholly unnecessary to maintain in the country the number of troops to which he had referred. The point of the argument, as far as the Estimates were concerned, was that if we reduced the number of troops abroad we must make a corresponding reduction at home. That was due to the linked battalion system condemned by many, but with which he sympathised because it enabled reductions to be made by bringing pressure, which was otherwise non-existent, on the Government at home. This argument applied also to India, where we had fifty-two battalions of infantry. He heard the right hon. Gentleman say that he had not heard from his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for India that he proposed to ask him to withdraw any of the fifty-two battalions which he had in India, and which he had had on that scale ever since the time of the Mutiny. He (Sir H. Cotton) did not know from that communication whether the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had consulted the Secretary of State for India or not, but he ventured to think that in so important a matter as this, a matter affecting the reduction and economy of military expenditure, it was most desirable that there should have been a conference between the two responsible Secretaries of State with a view to effecting economy if possible. As to the statement that fifty-two battalions had existed in India from the time of the Mutiny, the statement had no foundation whatever. He did not know what authority the right hon. Gentleman had for making the statement, but as a matter of fact there was a larger force now in India than there had ever been since the Mutiny.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that this Vote excluded the Indian forces, and therefore the hon. Gentleman was out of order in discussing Indian affairs.

*SIR H. COTTON said he was not interested in discussing Indian affairs except to show that the reduction of our military force in India would reduce the force in this country; that a corresponding reduction in this country must ensue. There had never been, since the Mutiny, so large a military force in India as at the present time. There were now some 79,000 British troops in the country; five years ago there were only 63,000. That was during the war. The troops were sent to South Africa from India at that time. During that war India might have been said to have been in an anxious condition in regard to foreign countries. If ever there was danger to India from invasion it was at that time, when Britain was weak and her enemies were strong. Then the British forces were reduced to 63,000, and it was found that that number was ample for all the purposes of defence. When there was no anxiety and when we could look at a perfectly serene sky on our frontiers the British force in India was increased to 79,000. That demanded some explanation and consideration at the hands of the Government. But the right hon. Gentleman said he was not responsible for the British troops in India. He (Sir H. Cotton) did not admit that. They had heard of this sort of thing before. The taxpayers were treated as a kind of football between the Secretary of State for India and the right hon. Gentleman, while the one Minister threw himself on the other for protection. There had been Viceroys in India who had done much in past years to reduce the British forces in that country.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. Gentleman appeared to be discussing the Indian establishment, he could not do that on this Vote. He would be in order in arguing that if the force in India was reduced, the force here would be reduced, but he was not in order in discussing the Indian Force in detail.

*SIR H. COTTON said he was trying to bring out the fact that these right hon. Gentlemen got out of the argument by throwing themselves on one another for protection. But there had been Viceroys who did reduce the troops in India. Lord Lawrence reduced the British force in that country by 7,000, and later on Lord Ripon reduced the establishment to 58,000 as against the 79,000 at the present time. So far from this being the number of troops retained in India since the Mutiny, he could well remember the day when there were only 55,000.

THE CHAIRMAN again called the hon. Member to order, and said he must not discuss the question in this manner.

*SIR H. COTTON said he would bow to the ruling of the Chairman, but he was bound to point out that the strength of the British Army in India was closely connected with the strength of the British Army here in this country, and that unless the Secretary of State for

War would consider this case in communication with the Secretary of State for India he would never be able to effect the reductions desired by the mass of the electors, who returned to Parliament Gentlemen like himself as well as right hon. Gentlemen who sat on the Treasury Bench.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said that he would make no reference to the speech they had just listened to except to say that when the hon. Gentleman found fault with the retention of the garrisons in South Africa, and said that before the war there was only a garrison of 3,000 there, some Members believed that had there been a larger garrison then, there might have been no war. With regard to the Indian comparisons which the hon. Gentleman had made, he could only say that so long as there were persons agitating against this country it would not be wise to make any reduction of our forces there. Coming now to the subject previously under discussion, which was of supreme importance to the country, he desired to say that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman and the action he had taken was a great contribution to the consideration of the greatest of our national problems. He would confine his observations to trying to obtain information from the right hon. Gentleman on various points of his scheme which he did not quite understand, and to point out those spots in it that it was desirable to remove before going further. The hon. Member for the Abercromby Division appeared to be delighted that the Army was so small, but regretted that further reductions had not been made. How small the hon. Gentleman would like it to be, he did not know. The hon. Gentleman hoped to get further reductions next year. They might go so far that it would not be worth while to have an Army at all. He could not help thinking that the speech of the hon. Member for the Abercromby Division must have been somewhat unpleasant hearing for the right hon. Gentleman in charge of this great question. One point which had struck him, and which made him a little bit inclined to differ from some of those who had spoken on his own side of the House, was that the right hon. Gentleman claimed, he had no doubt with perfect accuracy, that in this matter he represented not only his own mind, but the mind of the best representatives of the Army associated with him in the Army Council. That, of course, to him made a very considerable difference. But he wondered in what way the proposition had been put to the Army advisers. Had it been in this way—"Tell me how the Army can be made absolutely efficient, and we will see what can be done?" Or was it in this way—"You can only have so much money, and your efficiency must be made to correspond with the expenditure?" Of course, there was a difference where the military advisers had to consider efficiency first and economy afterwards, or where they had to consider economy first, and efficiency was to be made to fit in with the economy. He traced throughout the whole scheme the unfortunate necessity of the Government's having to carry out some of the pledges which were given at the last general election. With regard to the field force, under this scheme, personally and individually he objected to its reduction by over 16,000 men. In view of the casualties sustained in modern battles the reduction of our forces by 16,000 men was not a very good preliminary step to getting an efficient Army. He thought the reduction was a mistake, and he was surprised that the Army authorities should have given their consent to it, unless they were driven by necessity to confine this scheme within certain economical limits. The composition of the field force was to be 160,000 men, and it was to depend for its efficiency, as far as he could make out, on the reinforcement of 75,000 of the special contingent. He wanted to know whether what was called the special contingent was part of the field force or part of the territorial force.

MR. HALDANE said it would form part of the field force, to which it belonged. The special contingent would include not only the new battalions, but also highly skilled troops drawn from the new territorial force to be supernumerary on the mobilisation of the field force. On the other part of the Question put by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, he would like to say that he had never put upon the Army Council that they desired to reduce their battalions, except that it was a part of the general policy of the country. He also wished to say that he would not put upon the Army Council that they represented the most perfect thing imaginable. He knew nothing of what views they might have as to compulsory service, and he was not sure that they would not have liked to draft the Militia. But those things were withheld. What he said was: Granted these things, then the duty of the Army Council was to find the most perfect way.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY said this reply afforded an excellent instance of the very object he had in view, because he had elicited the confessions which the right hon. Gentleman had now made. With regard to the field force, he personally had seen little to object to in the general idea that was put forward concerning it, either as to its administration or as to the way in which it was to be commanded and divided. With regard to the territorial force, there seemed to be a dislike among some hon. Members about coming under the command of Regular officers, of coming under the military thumb. But how were they going to deal with the territorial force unless it was under the military thumb, unless it was under the command of a supreme military thumb? If there was a constant disinclination among Militia, Volunteers and Yeomanry to be commanded by Regular soldiers, then the right hon. Gentleman's scheme collapsed at once. Now, they were to have this third battalion, which formed an important part of the scheme. He was immediately struck by the doubt whether there was room at the headquarters depots if third battalions had to be housed in them. He could not understand what this special contingent of 75,000 men meant, or why they should depend for their training on the third battalion, with its nucleus. Why should they not be trained in the territorial headquarters of the regiment by the staff of the Regular regiment? He could not quite follow why that should not be. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to have based most of his hopes on the innate patriotism of the people, of the classes from which this territorial force was to be recruited. He based his hopes on their willingness to serve under the conditions which he laid down. It was of no use to him or his scheme if the Volunteers accepted this system and the Yeomanry declined it. It was of no use to his scheme if the Militia accepted it and the Volunteers and Yeomanry declined it. It was of no use to his scheme if the Yeomanry alone declined. Therefore, it was necessary for the completion of his scheme that they should all be willing to serve and do some fighting, and that he should have from the country at large a sufficient response to find at least 300,000 men. He would be unwilling to throw any doubt on the patriotic willingness of the people to bear their share of defending the honour of the country; but he did think it was a little dangerous, and he could conceive that it might mean the wrecking and ruining of the Imperial policy, if those who organised that policy depended upon a responsive movement which might not be made. If the men to be enlisted said "No," then the whole of that policy came to the ground, and they surrendered the country which they might have to defend. Of course it could not be conceived that a position of that sort was consonant with real patriotism, or with anything but a low and unworthy view of the necessities of the country or the Empire. Let them suppose the field force had gone abroad, and the territorial force was mobilised for six months' training. The right hon. Gentleman knew that at that particular time intense strain was laid on all the firms and great establishments which had to manufacture war material. He would give an instance of what he meant. He believed there existed a battalion of Volunteers at the Elswick Works. He would suppose that they were working day and night to turn out work which was absolutely necessary for a war. If the right hon. Gentleman said to them, "You must cease work and come out for six months' training" they would put a stop to the work. If he did not call them out, there would be a hole in his military arrangements. How was that difficulty going to be met? He was somewhat puzzled as to the relations of the future county associations, for he could not follow where their duties would end and where the duty of the military commander would begin. Those associations were to be composed of various county interests, from the lord-lieutenant downwards. The Secretary for War in his statement said that they reckoned very largely upon the co-operation and support of the landowners of the country in working successfully the county organisations. Last session he listened day after day to very different expressions of opinion in regard to the landowners of the country, and he objected to the idea that at one moment the Liberal Party could consistently accuse the landowners of defalcations and shortcomings, and the next moment, when they wanted something out of them, applaud them in the House of Commons. He believed they would forget the insults which had been heaped upon them and take their share in any scheme for the good of the nation. He understood that under the new arrangements the Militia, Yeomanry and Volunteers were all to be placed on an absolutely equal footing. There might be some difficulty in carrying out that feeling of equality—which would have to be real and genuine if these forces were to work together harmoniously and train at the same place and time. He took it that each county was to be called upon to provide a certain quota of military force, but that seemed to him difficult of elaboration. In his own county they had an efficient regiment of Yeomanry and two good rural battalions of Volunteers, besides the local Militia. Would his county have to find its quota? Would they have to find so many Yeomanry, Volunteers, or Militia, or would they have to furnish so many more cavalry and so many less infantry? If so, what would become of the remainder of the county establishment? That seemed to him to be a point of real difficulty which required some elucidation. He did not intend taking advantage of a great many small points which he might easily have used to stir up feeling, but he recognised that the working of any really lasting scheme must be based upon the willingness of all arms to serve side by side in the second line. He had not made his criticisms with the idea of condemning the scheme, because he might be able to support it when he thoroughly understood it. All he wished was to be clear that certain difficulties which to him appeared obvious either did not exist or could be got rid of.

Colonel Kenyon-Slaney.

*Colonel HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.) said he had a distinct recollection of reading about a policy put forward a few years ago by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon and subsequently vindicated by him in a work of great interest which many members had read. That policy involved not the reduction of a small number of battalions such as had been carried out by the Secretary of State for War, but the destruction of no fewer than thirty-eight battalions of the line. The vindication put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon was that in throwing thirty-eight surplus battalions into the melting-pot and adding to that compound thirty-three battalions of the Militia he hoped they could after a certain time—during which the heated feelings caused by that admixture might have cooled down—draw off a compound and label it "Short service Army, Croydon" or possibly "Belfast 1904," which would be an admirable reserve force for times of necessity in this country. But he understood from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon on Monday that his charge against the present Secretary for War was that he had reduced the Regular Army and that he was going to wipe out the Militia. It was difficult to say which of the two right hon. Gentlemen was the greater criminal. Was it the right hon. Gentleman who had had the hardihood and boldness to carry out what he conceived to be right, or the right hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench who had the intention but not the backing to carry it through? He did not propose to follow all the criticisms which had been levelled at the great scheme of future organisation which his right hon. friend had outlined, because there would be an opportunity for further discussion of the details when the scheme was presented in the form of a Bill. He would therefore like to deal more with the Estimates as a whole. He would like to call attention to two very significant figures in the Estimates—the cost of the *personnel* of the Regular Army amounting to £12,391,000, and another total for services, other than but subsidiary to, *personnel*, amounting to £12,499,000. There was a striking and significant symmetry about those figures. The former figure representing an "establishment," or paper force of men, might not be spent, because the men might not be recruited. The latter figure representing estimated requirements based on that "establishment," was sure to be spent, whether the men enlisted or not, whether in fact there was a real effective or only a paper establishment. Experience had shown it, and the right hon. Gentleman had admitted it. This brought them face to face with the greatest of all difficulties in connection with our military system—the waste caused by the discrepancy between the effective and the establishment strength of the Army. That it was a blot on our present system they must all admit. A method for overcoming that inherent weakness was to be found in changing voluntary service for compulsory service. If, as he ventured to believe, the country would not face that alternative—and even in the Army itself there was no general desire to change the voluntary for the compulsory system—surely his right hon. friend in framing his Estimates and drawing up the scheme he had submitted to them had done wisely in trying to overcome the great discrepancy between the real effective strength represented by men and the establishment or paper strength, which might be anything or represent no real strength whatever and yet cost money. That, he ventured to say, was the key to the Estimates and the real foundation of the scheme for reorganisation. The right hon. Gentleman had made a very considerable contribution towards the solution of the problem which had been the crux of many administrations. He had done something to give us a real instead of a fictitious strength both in men and in officers. In the training battalions which he proposed to give us he had not destroyed the Militia, but he had taken from it a constant source of grievance. The Militia had been bled white by the drawing off of the Militia reserve men, who were good, effective and efficient men, but were neither "militia" nor "reserve" and by the taking away of those men who enlisted in the Militia below the physical standard of the Army, but who were passed into the Army as soon as they attained that standard; with the result that nothing but the residuum was left for the Militia. This position had been dealt with in a very effective manner by his right hon. friend in the establishment of the so-called training battalions. They would be as he understood it, practically a recruiting machine. They would get their men and put them through a certain amount of military training, which now they were obliged to get in a Militia battalion, to the detriment of that battalion, and they might afterwards be attracted into the regular Army. With regard to the general system of administration under which it was proposed to deal with the auxiliary forces as a whole, they were not interfering with that portion of the Army which would be required for foreign service, but were making such arrangements that those serving at home would be able to serve in the manner which would be most suitable and convenient to their civil avocations. Surely that was common sense. He would like to refer to the valuable White Paper which the right hon. Gentleman had issued to them in the last twenty-four hours, showing what was going to be done in order to provide more officers. He ventured to say that that was the first practical step which had ever been taken to systematise the provision of officers in this country. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman most heartily upon the way in which the work had been carried out by those to whom he had entrusted it. He would have liked the Committee to have gone a little bit further. He would like to have seen a little more imagination thrown into that proposal for a training corps which was to be based upon the public school cadet corps and upon the University corps. If they could only keep a hold upon the young men who belonged to these corps and bring them gradually into the service of the country, whether in the Regular Army or as supplemental officers, or in the Auxiliary Forces, they would be doing a great work and securing the best material for officers. If the University Volunteer corps and the public school cadet corps were united under a common name and brought under the direct patronage of the august head of the Army—were made royal cadets—and given the right to wear the uniform appertaining to that branch of the service, they would get an indissoluble union between these boys and young men. It was mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman in his speech on Monday that the organisation of the new third battalions would be on the four company or "double company" principle. That, he thought, indicated a step in the right direction. He was quite certain that for the organisation of the territorial infantry the four company battalion was undoubtedly the best. The squadron organisation of cavalry had been a complete success, and for years thinking soldiers had advocated a similar reform of infantry organisation. He commended that suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman. He regretted the attack which the hon. and gallant Member for Central Sheffield had made on the Regular officers as not being fit to deal with the Volunteers. There were a number of officers both at home and in the self-governing Colonies whose whole duties lay with troops raised under the Volunteer system. They were not to speak in this House for themselves and it was to vindicate their character and the splendid service done by them that he ventured to characterise those remarks as ungenerous. There were endless details which came to one's mind when considering the far-reaching scheme outlined by the right hon. Gentleman, and they would welcome the submission of that scheme in its complete form.

*MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs) said that no one could have listened to the three hours speech which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had made on Monday without a feeling of sympathy and admiration. And, however much they might differ from him, he thought that, at any rate, the right hon. Gentleman deserved their thanks for his courtesy and unfailing patience. It was with a feeling of great disappointemnt that he himself had studied the right hon. Gentleman's speech and scheme of Army reform. He had hoped to hear something very different; but, taking the subject as it was, he looked upon it as a national and not a Party question, having in view the immense territories over which our flag flies. Knowing something of the vastness of the foreign armies with which he hoped we might never be involved, but with which we must be prepared to contend if necessity arose, it was with no light heart that he looked to the abolition of ten battalions of the line, and knowing, as he did, the good work they had done during the late war in South Africa, it was also with a feeling of sorrow that he looked to the contemplated destruction of the Militia. He was for eighteen months in South Africa, and when he came across a Militia regiment he could not tell whether it was a Regular or a Militia regiment except for their badges—they acted with as much precision and showed as much general proficiency as the regiments of the line. Then as to the Yeomanry, he granted that the men who received only 1s. 4d. a day pay had some right to complain of the Yeomanry receiving 5s. per day, seeing that they could do as much good work as the latter. In fact the shilling-a-day men often pulled the 5s. a day men out of difficulties. At the same time, patience and money had been spent in making the Yeomanry into a very efficient force, which was now to be crippled or destroyed by a stroke of the pen. It might be that their patriotism was so strong that they would continue to serve. Many a farm labourer, however, who would come out for training and pay another to do his work for him, could not afford to do so if this money at present received by him were taken from him. He did not know how the volunteers would like the scheme of a four years service and a fine of £5 for not completing that term. He thought that it would be wise on the part of the Government to let the volunteers be free to join and to leave in the future as in the past. The essence of volunteering was freedom. This Home Army was to be an Army on the cheap; he could wish that it would be an efficient Army. If they jumbled together the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers, and mobilised them for six months, after a war begun, they would be courting disaster; if they were afraid to mobilise the new force and make it efficient before the outbreak of war, the country would be in a worse position than it was before.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said that although he was a commanding officer of Militia he did not think that the proposals of the Secretary of State for War would be the destruction of that force. The private Militiaman would have practically the same conditions of service as at present; and the only difficulty would be in regard to the officers of the seventy-four battalions. He looked to that with some apprehension, because the Militia was already short of officers. A great number of the officers were, no doubt, not so good as they ought to be; but there were others who were good men. He believed that a large number of subalterns and captains who might be useful on the outbreak of a war would be lost to the force under the new conditions. Another objection to the alteration of the disposition of the seventy-four battalions was that the men when embodied would not be in touch with their old officers whom they knew and who had know them for a long time and who could trust each other. He trusted something would be done to modify the scheme in that respect. An hon. Member opposite had been very pleased when he got what he thought was a confession from the Secretary of State for War; but that was only the old confession that they should cut their coat according to the amount of cloth they had. That was not the principle acted upon a few years ago when the country went too far in over-spending its resources. The predecessors of the present Minister for War brought forward great and expensive schemes, and the result was that the voice of the country had to be listened to in demanding large reductions in Army expenditure. He thought the Secretary for War was to be congratulated on the reductions he had made, and they were all grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for having made them. [Opposite cries of "No."] He knew that there were many soldiers who thought that there was a danger of going too far; but if a good scheme could be got for a territorial Army which might be relied on, there was a possibility of a reduction of expenditure on the Army being effected. The hon. Member for Shropshire had suggested that the territorial Army would not come to the scratch when it was required; but if we were involved in a great war, with the country behind the Government of the day, there would be no fear of there not being plenty of volunteers from those troops to the Regular Army. The objection was that the territorial Army was only half-trained, but by the time that they were called upon to replace the regular troops they would have had six months of continuous training in addition to what they had before. The right hon. Member for Dover said that there would be confusion when the regular troops were sent abroad and only the territorial Army was left at home. That occurred during the South African war when the late Government was in power; but if the late Government had embodied the Militia on the declaration of war the confusion and enormous expense caused during the disastrous times of that war would have been avoided. If we had this territorial Army, at the end of six months troops could be sent abroad, and there would be a very good force prepared for taking their place. In regard to the "bridge" of seventy-four battalions he wanted to know exactly where they were in regard to them. One objection taken to them was that if they were created there would not be room for them in the new barracks. He did not think that was a valid objection, because the moment war broke out there would be room in the barracks. But where was the *cadre* save in the persons of the major and the four captains, who would be perfectly unable to control 800 or 1,000 regular troops. But if war broke out there would be a difficulty in finding officers. One thing the right hon. Gentleman was entitled to credit for was an increased supply of 100 subalterns from Sandhurst, but even then the right hon. Gentleman would have difficulty in finding officers for these seventy-four battalions. He knew that the answer would be that officers would be supplied from the territorial Army. But even then, these territorial officers would not know the men or be in touch with them, and they would themselves be men of slight training and would not be so good in point of training as the men they were called upon to command. He thought it would be better if some scheme could be devised to give these men permanent officers or, at all events, officers who would be with them for at least some months or a year and thus be in touch with them. He did not think the scheme in regard to the Yeomanry had been quite fairly criticised. It was said that they were being deprived of 5s. 6d. and were only to have 1s. or 1s. 6d. a day. He believed that the pay and rations would work out at 2s. 8d., and that there were stores and equipments which they at present supplied themselves, but which would in future be supplied by the Government, because the force was now to be treated absolutely as Regulars. Therefore the reduction was not 2s. 4d. but something considerably smaller. He thought everybody agreed when 5s. 6d. a day was fixed that it was an extravagant amount, and that it was reasonable that some reduction should be made. He did not think a reduction of 2s. or even 2s. 6d. a day would prevent farmers from joining the force as they had done in the past. He thought they had sufficient patriotism to join, because they would receive sufficient to enable them to employ men to do their work during the time they were absent from it. There was one charge he looked upon as extravagant and that was for generals, whose pay formed the most expensive part of the Army Estimates. There ought not to be so many of them, and it would be much more economical to employ adjutants. On the whole he congratulated the Secretary of State upon having introduced a scheme would reduce the cost of the Army without impairing its efficiency.

*COLONEL R. WILLIAMS (Dorsetshire, W.) said he desired to look at this question of the Territorial Army from the inside, as he was within a fortnight of completing forty years service, and took a keen interest in all that concerned it. He knew nothing of the jealousy of the Regular forces which had been referred to; but what the Volunteer forces did sometimes complain of was a certain want of sympathy, and failure to understand all the conditions of their service; and no doubt Regular officers differed, as was the case in all things. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had based his policy upon a hotch-potch of something like 300,000 men and was attempting to turn the Volunteer system into a compulsory system in two ways. In the first place they were to be enlisted for four years and a considerable fine was to be inflicted if a man left the service unreasonably. That condition in his opinion varied it from a Volunteer to a compulsory service. In time of war, moreover, it was hoped that this force would volunteer for foreign service, not individually, but by battalions or regiments or divisions. That was also a sort of compulsion as it did away with the individual position of the Volunteers. At the outbreak of war, moreover, they might be mobilised six months. They were told that the Militia was dwindling. Why was that? Because the stress of trade competition was so acute that the men who had hitherto joined the Militia had not the time now to do so and joined the Volunteers. If his battalion were asked to go out for six months training in time of war they could not do it. He would lose his best field officer and a considerable portion of his captains if that condition was insisted upon. Why? Because they were professional men. If a man was a doctor, a lawyer, or a wine merchant, he could not afford to give up his occupation for six months, as it meant the sacrifice of his living. This was recognised by the Committee on the Training of Officers, who remarked that the requisite time must be given before men went into business, as they could not give up their time in later years. If this six months continuous training in case of war was insisted upon under a territorial system they would have to recruit the Volunteer force from a different class from that from which it was now drawn. The particular class of men to which he was alluding must be captured before they entered upon professional life. The patriotism of the country was undeniable, but they must remember that the conditions of mercantile competition with foreign nations, and the demand for skilled workmen were greater than ever they were before. At the same time there were so many men out of work that masters would not wait for a man, but filled up his post. Some years ago he was asked how many men he could get to come up upon mobilisation within twenty-four hours, and he said 90 per cent., for the first fortnight, but after that not more than 60 or 70 per cent. at one time; but this six months continuous training would be a serious bar to such a state of things and to the efficiency of the Volunteer corps.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) did not wish to take a hand among the experts in what had been described as "Bridge." He wanted, however, to know what would be the effect of this reduction upon fourth Volunteer battalions. He did not ask for any ruling as to any individual battalion, but to give a concrete case, would take, for instance, the fifth battalion of the South Wales Borderers in his own constituency; would it disappear?

MR. HALDANE: It will disappear on its present footing.

*MR. REES said there were other Members, who did not understand exactly how the new system would work out in this respect, but at present he need say nothing further upon that. He would like to know whether the cadres which were preserved under Mr. Cardwell's organisation were to be preserved, and whether any addition was to be made to them for the purpose of filling up drafts for India on account of those which had admittedly disappeared. The Army at home supplied 75,000 men for India, and the right hon. Gentleman last year informed the House that not a man, nor a gun, nor a battery, would be reduced in the Indian establishment. He desired to know whether it was the case that in spite of the changes to be introduced there would be a provision for the maintenance of those 75,000 British soldiers together with the present complement of artillery. In his opinion the Minister who would propose to reduce the strength of the Indian Army which was fixed at the strength considered necessary after the Mutiny and had been preserved at that strength ever since would incur the gravest responsibility. He rather gathered from one of the speeches delivered to-night that they were advised to trust to Bengalee agitators rather than to British bayonets, but that was not an opinion held by any sane surveyor of the situation. Our fellow-subjects in India had realised the fact that a strong and efficient Army was the greatest factor for peace. There were, however, some points of detail upon which India was rather hardly treated, and if the right hon. Gentleman could see his way to reduce the charges made by way of capitation grant, he would redress a long-felt grievance. He also hoped that the Cape garrison would not be indefinitely reduced. There was no apprehension of trouble there at present, but the force at the Cape was not larger than was necessary. True the Boers were not likely to give trouble. They might say, "*Bella gerant allii*; we'll try the ballot boxes." But our countrymen were a few among many natives of the country, and their safety was a paramount consideration. The too great reduction of the peace strength of our troops in foreign possessions, inspired a feeling that we were letting things down, provoked attacks, and was opposed to the preservation of the peace.

*MR. COURTHOPE (Rye, Sussex) said he desired to say a few words as a junior Volunteer officer on the aspect of this case as it appeared to him and his brother officers. He was very glad to hear his hon. and gallant friend, who had had forty years service in the Volunteer Forces, say that he was aware of no jealousy on the part of Volunteer officers of officers of the Line. He desired to endorse that view. Their complaint had been that they had not been sufficiently associated with the Regular Army; that they had never been regarded as soldiers, and that no attempt had been made to make the Volunteers into soldiers. He welcomed the association with the Regular Army that the right hon. Gentleman was aiming at and the Divisional organisation which he was proposing. The Volunteer Forces had suffered enormously from the want of co-ordination. There had never been co-ordination between brigades, there had been too little co-ordination between battalions. He welcomed also the proposals with regard to camp, that the camp should be fifteen days in all. They were once allowed to go into camp for a month during the war, but it cost the Government so much that they had never been allowed to go out for more than a week since. Ever since then they had been asking to be allowed to take the happy mean and go to camp for a fortnight. A week was no good at all. On the Saturday they went into camp; on Sunday, from some absurd reason, they were allowed to do nothing; on Monday they were settling down, and on Tuesday they started work. Then on Thursday there was inspection and on Friday they packed up, and only two days' real work was possible. But there was one point on which he could not make up his mind, and that was whether these extra services, double camp and other advantages, given to this territorial Army could be given at less cost than the cost of the present organisation. He hoped it might be so, but he could not help thinking that the right hon. Gentlemen had not entirely justified the very low estimate which he had placed on this territorial second line. He did not share the misgivings of some hon. Members as to the four years enlistment or as to the £5 fine. The Volunteer did not care whether he enrolled or whether he enlisted, or whether it was for three years or four, and as to the fine, they have been told over and over again that the £5 fine placed a man on a different footing than at present, but that was not so. For all practical purposes it was just the same. In his own battalion there was only one fortnight in the year when they allowed a Volunteer to give notice. He had to give notice within the last fortnight of October if he was going to go without being run in for the 35s. capitation grant. He signed on for three years, but if he went during his first year he was run in for three years capitation grant, and it made no difference to him whether he was run in at the local petty sessional court under civil contract with his commanding officer, or whether he was fined under a statute. There was one point on which he had misgivings. It had been mentioned once or twice already. He thought they would have trouble with the employers over the six months mobilisation. There would be no trouble with the landowners. They would help. But there would be difficulty with the employers. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to make some suggestion or hold out some hope that the difficulty might be got over, because he felt that at present it was a very great one. He knew that under our present system, Volunteers might be called out in a national emergency to defend our shores, but that was rather a different thing. It was a very remote contingency.

MR. HALDANE said it was just the same contingency. The mobilisation would only be on a very great emergency when the whole of the Reserves would be called out. It was just the same sort of contingency as was contemplated in a great national emergency.

*MR. COURTHOPE thanked the right hon. Gentleman, and said he rather gathered that under the new scheme the mobilisation for six months would take place under a much less urgent necessity than at present, but he felt reassured. He had only one more misgiving and it was this. He did not quite see his way through the transition period, which must be difficult and lengthy. How were they going to get from the present number in a given county to the number that might be required, because he gathered that there would be considerable variation—there must be from what he knew of the force. The transition period must necessarily be a period of very great difficulty. They would have at the same time recruits under the new scheme, and men who were now serving, who would not be prepared to go on under the scheme, and yet whom presumably we should not want to get rid of immediately, because we did not want to deplete one force until we had the other. It might be all right; he hoped it would be. He was sure that all Parties and all sections of the Auxiliary Forces would do their best to help the right hon. Gentleman with his scheme, but he did not himself see his way through that difficulty. If he might he wanted to mention one or two points of detail which had occurred to him. The first was a point the right hon. Gentleman himself raised in his speech on Monday with reference to the present mobilisation arrangement. He thought every company in the battalion in which he served had its own contracts all ready and complete for mobilisation. He had in his company. He could lay his hand within six hours on transport for everything required, and he thought it was the same right through. He had an idea that that system was very general in the Volunteer force, and that, speaking from the point of view of individual units, they were really better prepared for mobilisation than the right hon. Gentleman gave them credit for. But that was a minor point. While he was mentioning mobilisation, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to send Volunteer units for their usual training to the position which they would occupy on mobilisation. He had been a Volunteer officer for fifteen years, and had never in a military capacity seen the place to which they were to go on mobilisation. He had been there on a private visit but that was all. It was very deplorable that such a state of things should exist, and he hoped it might be changed. There was another point with reference to the Memorandum which the right hon. Gentleman had issued. He gathered from the second paragraph of the approximate estimated cost of the territorial force that there were to be no Regular adjutants in the territorial regiments, and he had some doubt as to the advisability or possibility of replacing Regular adjutants by auxiliaries.

MR. HALDANE: That is not what is intended. The policy is that the General Staff should rather concentrate their Regular adjutants as a provisional staff, and that new adjutants should be appointed.

*MR. COURTHOPE said he hoped this might succeed. He happened one summer to act as adjutant to a Volunteer battalion, and he knew what an exceedingly serious thing it was for a Volunteer officer to undertake. Another point which he considered even more serious was that apparently the present system of sergeant instructors was going to be changed. The only mention the Secretary for War had made of sergeant instructors was that of a man riding on a bicycle to the village green or to the village school and training the troops there. A sergeant instructor of a Volunteer company had much more to do than that. It might be possible to do away with them to a large extent in the town corps, where everything was concentrated, but in the country battalions, where nearly every company had its own orderly room, its own organisation, and a considerable amount of clerical and other work to be done as well as its drills, they could not dispense with sergeant instructors, who had to do all that work. He would take an example of what passed in his own company. He drew his company from six or seven different parishes. There was an enormous amount of clerical and other work to be done, and he had to keep up an orderly room. He was, so to speak, his own commanding officer, and his own adjutant as well as captain, and it was absolutely necessary that he should have an instructor. They could not dispense with a professional instructor in such cases. And yet there was no provision in these Estimates for anything like the number of professional instructors that would be required, if the country companies of Volunteer battalions were to keep their present instructors. The occasional man dropping in on a bicycle, and holding a drill in the village school would not be sufficient.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member need be in no doubt. We do not intend to make any alteration in the present system. I appreciate to the full the value of what he says.

*MR. COURTHOPE said he was very glad indeed to hear that; he must have misunderstood the figures, which did not appear to him to be sufficient. Then there was a point as to the expenses of administration, and here again he referred more to the rural battalions than to the town battalions. He saw from the Estimate that no payment of any kind, beyond railway fares, was to be made to officers and men for attendance at drills. Did that refer to the cost of conveyance, or only to actual pay? Because if it meant that no financial provision would be made for the expenses of attending drills, it would be a very serious blow.

MR. HALDANE was understood to say that it was not proposed to withdraw the payment of expenses.

*MR. COURTHOPE said that was all right. He was glad to know that, because in these rural districts a very large proportion of the annual expenses they had to bear was in getting the men in to drill. Where a single company might be drawn from six or seven parishes, as in his own case, and the men were to a certain extent agricultural labourers who had done a hard day's work, they could not be expected to march six or seven miles to drill, and then to march home again. They could not do it. In his own case, in a single company, he spent £40 or £50 a year on van hire, and it was a very necessary expense if they were to get the men together at all for practical work. He was glad that would be dealt with. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman did not mind his raising these little points of detail. His next point was about dress. He saw that one suit of service dress would be provided for each man. Were they going to do away with the full dress?

MR. HALDANE was understood to say that the allowance would be for service dress only.

*MR. COURTHOPE: The rest would be provided, he took it, by the County Committees.

MR. HALDANE: That is at their discretion.

*MR. COURTHOPE thought that although the service dress was very serviceable and useful it was very necessary that the men should be given a change of clothes—for instance, in camp, or in hot weather—and also that they should have something a little bit smarter than a well worn service kit, in order, for one thing, not to strike a blow at recruiting. The service dress, when it had been worn on field days and so on for two or three years, did not look well on a church parade, and it was necessary that there should be full dress in many, if not all, cases for the Volunteers. He had one other point on the Estimates. Provision was made for 1680 riding horses, presumably chargers, under the heading of infantry brigades. That worked out at ten chargers per battalion at the public cost. Was the right hon. Gentleman going to mount the captains, because he did not know where the ten chargers would come in otherwise? He hoped he would mount the captains, for they would then be able to do better work, and personally he would enjoy it much, although, of course, he did not know that that was the intention, but ten chargers per battalion were being provided at the public cost for the infantry battalions of the territorial Army. There was one point with regard to the territorial Army which involved a larger principle than these matters of detail. Was the organisation of the territorial force going to be the same in Ireland? They had no Volunteers there, but they had Militia.

MR. HALDANE: I explained in my speech that there are no Volunteers in Ireland, but we propose to take the existing Irish Militia battalions, to make those who are in them enlist under the special service clauses of the Bill, and in that way to get a number of extra battalions in Ireland to represent the old Irish Militia.

*MR. COURTHOPE said he wished to air a grievance or two about ammunition and rifles. As to ammunition the right hon. Gentleman promised him early last year to remove a grievance, which the Volunteers felt very much, about the quality of ammunition, and he would like to take that opportunity of thanking him for carrying out that promise promptly, the grievance having been redressed at once. It was now more about the quantity than the quality of the ammunition that he wished to speak. At present they had nothing like enough, and he hoped it might be increased to an almost unlimited extent. The man who was willing and prepared to give his time and to make himself a really efficient shot ought to be able to get his ammunition for nothing. In days gone by there was far more attention given to shooting and musketry than was now the case. He did not think there was sufficient encouragement given to the young men of the country to make themselves really efficient rifle shots, and it was a matter of the greatest importance. Lord Roberts had said that if ten marks were to be given for military efficiency eight of those marks should go to musketry, and he was sure that that was no exaggeration, and that if Volunteers were willing to give their time and go on the range week after week they should get an unlimited quantity of ammunition, provided, of course, that their shooting was under proper supervision, and that the ammunition was not wasted. Then as to rifles. In the right hon. Gentleman's Memorandum issued with the Army Estimates, there was a statement that he intended to re-arm the Volunteer force with a new, or rather a converted, rifle, the long Lee-Enfield. He did not know whether it was official or not, but he found a paragraph in the daily papers on Monday, giving details about this rifle. The rifle, he understood, was to have the long Lee-Enfield barrel rather than the short one, and that he was very glad to see, because he was convinced that it was a better barrel in every way. Directly they got beyond 500 yards it was more accurate, and it had a great advantage over the short rifle on dark days and in the evenings when the short barrel showed a flash, but the long barrel did not. He was also glad that this long barrel was to be kept, because it was very much less liable to drop the foresight, one of the commonest failings of the indifferent rifle shot. That was a point on which he thought everyone who had handled both would agree with him. The further particulars which were given in the public Press said that the rifle was to be adapted and fitted with a charger or outrigger, as on the short rifle, for clip loading. He hoped it might be possible to adapt the long rifle to clip loading, but by some method more serviceable than that adapted with regard to the short ·303. The outrigger was so easily liable to damage and to be knocked off, and he hoped it might be found possible to adopt some simpler system. His last point, and one of the most important, was with regard to the question of sights. He did not know what sights were going to be used for this new rifle. The Press stated that the back sight was going to be the Lee-Enfield "leaf." He hoped that was not so, because it was a very bad sight. He did not pretend to be an expert in this matter, but he had done a great deal of rifle-shooting with a great variety of weapons and he was pretty well in touch with the best rifle shots of the day. The Lee-Enfield leaf back sight was a bad sight unless they used all sorts of tinkering adjustments to get it into order. As it was fixed on the rifle it was no good at all. It gave a great deal of trouble, and the slide was apt to get out of order. If it worked loose, they could not keep it in place without using it at an angle instead of horizontally. On the other hand it was often too stiff to adjust with accuracy. All these defects were removed by the back sight which was fixed to the short ·303 rifle which, with one or two alterations, would be an excellent back sight, because the adjustment was simple and not likely to get out of order. There was no fear of the bar slipping when once it was adjusted, and it was fitted with a simple screw mechanism, not only for wind-guage alterations but for altering the elevation as well. Those things were very desirable if they wanted to encourage good rifle-shooting. He knew it was said in opposition to this sight that the ordinary "Tommy" was not up to judging wind and altering the sight with the wind-guage in front. Very well, let him leave it alone. He need not use the screws. It was quite possible to use this sight without moving the wind-guage at all, and at the same time the expert shot who could judge the wind was able to take full advantage of the sight. As to the foresight he thought the short rifle ·303 was, on the whole, a very good one, but the wings were much too heavy He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would bear that in mind. The wings were necessary to protect the foresight, but should not be of the massive pattern fixed to the present short rifle. As a general principle of policy with regard to this question of sights he hoped the right hon. Gentleman and the Army Council would see their way to allow much greater latitude to marksmen in the matter of their sights. No country in the world was so tied down by regulation as we were in regard to this matter. It was notorious that different eyes required different sights in order to utilise their rifles to the best advantage. In the United States great latitude was allowed, and on the Army rifles all sorts of peep sights and other things were fixed, to the very great advantage of those who used them. It might be said that this would cause expense. Of course it would, but it was nothing like the heavy expense which had to be borne by individual marksmen in this country, in the purchase of orthoptics and verniers. It would mean a great economy to them and a good thing in every way if they were allowed, instead of using all these contrivances which they could not take on service, and were no good except on rifle ranges, to fix suitable sights on their own rifles. They would then have the full advantage of them on service, as long as they succeeded in keeping their own rifles with them. He had said that different eyes required different sights. He had personally fixed sights to a rifle, which were worth two or three points in thirty-five, but he might not use them, and many other rifle shots were in the same position. He hoped the Government might be able to adopt a policy of greater latitude in this matter. He was sure it would pay in the long run. It would increase the interest in musketry, and that not only amongst good shots; because the indifferent man would soon realise the advantage gained by experts in the use of these sights, and that would encourage him to pay attention to the matters of wind and elevation, and to find out what suited his own eyesight best. By doing this they would not only be giving a boon to the expert, but also encouragement to the indifferent and the beginner. By these means general proficiency in the Auxiliary Forces would be attained. He was sure that was an object which all interested in shooting must have in view.

*Captain KINCAID-SMITH (Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon): said that unless every one agreed to yield up his personal opinions and helped to make the right hon. Gentleman's scheme a success there appeared to be little chance of giving practical effect to it. Under this scheme 150,000 men were to be put aside as an expeditionary force. The scheme, however, must stand or fall by the fact whether or not the country would be provided with machinery to put a far larger body of men in the field than it was able to do in 1900, or was contemplated by this expeditionary force. The possibility of a war which might require these men was very remote, but we had nevertheless always to look forward to it. It was agreed by both sides that what we wanted was this small expeditionary force of 150,000 men, and we also had to prepare for the possibility of a great war on a larger scale. That great struggle might be on the Indian frontier or on the Egyptian frontier, but so long as this country was supreme at sea the latter danger did not need to be taken into account. We always had to look forward to requiring a large force on the Indian frontier, and the test to apply to the present scheme was whether we should be in a better position under it to put this large number of men into the field on the Indian frontier. The hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division made a very fine speech, but it was spoiled by the dangerous doctrines expressed as to the value of the Volunteer unit, as compared with the professional unit.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again"—(*Captain Kincaid-Smith*),—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND (DISESTABLISHMENT).

*Mr. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) rose to call attention to the desirability of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England as by law established, and to move "That in the interests alike of religion and the nation, it was desirable to disestablish and disendow the Church of England both in England and Wales." He said that in 1869, Mr. Gladstone, one of the Godliest as well as one of the ablest statesmen who ever sat in the House, after consulting the people at the great election of 1868, and being given by them a large majority, disestablished and disendowed the Church in Ireland. In 1871 Mr. Edward Miall, then Member for Bradford, submitted a Motion to the same Parliament to the effect that it was desirable to extend the same process to the other Established Churches in these islands. A high-toned discussion followed in which ten Members took part. The Motion was rejected by a large majority, eighty-six voting for and 204 against it, so showing that that Parliament was not then in favour of extending the process of disestablishment further. Mr. Gladstone concluded the discussion on that occasion with the following words—

> "I shall venture to say to my hon. friend, what I am sure he will not resent, that if he seeks to convert the majority of the House of Commons, he must begin by undertaking the preliminary work of converting to these opinions the majority of the people of England."

Thirty-six years had gone by since that debate and vote. Most of those who took part in them had been gathered to their fathers. To-day there was sitting there a new Parliament recently elected by the people. It was a very remarkable Parliament—it contained a larger proportion of the common people than any Parliament that had ever gone before it. He was glad to hear the late Prime Minister last year speak of the new Parliament as a "well-meaning" Parliament. He had ventured to put down the Motion which he was about to move in order to give to this new Parliament an opportunity of recording by its vote its opinion on the great question the Motion raised. It would surely be of advantage alike to statesmen and churchmen to know the general mind of the House upon a question which went down to the very roots of the daily life of the nation. He very very earnestly pressed his hon. and right hon. friends, who had put down Amendments, not to move them, but to be content with using them as opportunities of speaking on the Motion. He beseeched them to allow a straight vote to be taken on the broad principle that the Motion raised. They surely would like to know the real mind of the present House of Commons. Of course he was well aware that there was no time that night for anything like a full discussion of this great question, but there was time to record their votes. Before the views expressed in the Motion took the form of Bills, whether in this House or the other, they might be sure the amplest time would be afforded for the discussion of both principles and details. What he earnestly hoped was that all would help that night to allow them by the votes of the House to see whether the process of converting the people, of which Mr. Gladstone spoke in 1871, had or had not been accomplished. He would try to set the example of brevity—an example which, if he might respectfully offer an opinion, was very much needed in this House. Unfortunately, long speeches were sadly too common. He would try to give the House only the great leading facts which he thought should lead to the support of the Motion. Centuries ago, under circumstances quite different, happily, from those prevailing now, great changes were made in the religious arrangements of this nation, which issued in the "Protestant reformed religion," as it was described in the Coronation Oath, being "established by law." For the services and maintenance of this reformed Church were appropriated by Parliament certain very large funds as tithes, lands, etc., which were under their control. Both the religion and the funds were for the whole nation, they were for the use of all, and dire pains and penalties were meted out to any who dissented from the Church thus established by law as the National Church, as the Church of all. What was the position of this National Church to-day? In a legal sense he understood they were all still members of it. Parliament, the Parliament of the whole nation, had control over this National Church and its funds. But in any real religious sense it was now the Church of only a minority of the people; it was one among the many religious denominations into which our religious life was divided; it was only distinguishable from the others by the preference which the State gave to it. They could not know with any exactness the relative size of the National Church—he was speaking of the actual living religious Church of England—as compared with the whole of the people, but they did know certain clear unmistakable facts. The first was that large masses of the people were outside any of the religious denominations, and so were outside of its pale. That was a fact they all regretted. Secondly, they knew that there were between one and two millions of Roman Catholics in this land of ours, and they, of course, were outside the pale of the National Church. The third thing they knew was that the Protestant Free Churches were outside, and the sitting accommodation in their places of worship considerably exceeded that provided by the Established Church. The latter provided accommodation for 7,300,000 sitters, and the Protestant Free Churches for 8,400,000. The relative numbers of scholars in their Sunday schools confirmed substantially the accuracy of these figures. They showed that in the Church Sunday schools there were 3,000,000 scholars, while in the Protestant Free Church schools there were 3,500,000. He respectfully submitted that these figures showed that the National Church, so-called, had within her pale less than one-half of the active religious life of the nation, and probably not much more than one-third of the whole people who made up the nation. He could not, of course, give the exact figures, but he was sure that all would agree that there was substantial truth in the statement which he had made. He asked the House to stop for a moment and marvel at the wonderful facts to which he had called attention. Let them look at the advantages of the National Church. For centuries she had been in possession of all the parish churches—the most beautiful buildings in our land, buildings associated for generations and centuries with the religious feelings of the people of the country. There was also the rectory or vicarage in every parish with a resident minister. In the county in which he lived it was a common saying that the best house in every parish was the parson's. These houses were associated with the work of dispensing charities, both public and private, and of course they were centres of great influence. Besides the parsonage influence, the National Church had all the ancient seats of learning. Our famous colleges, our great public schools, and all the grammar schools were in her possession, thus giving her the tuition of the flower of our youth of the upper and middle classes. Most of the elementary schools in towns and villages had also for the last three-quarters of a century been in the possession of that Church. Nearly all the training colleges too had also been in her possession. Look again at her great army of ministers, and at the long roll of illustrious names among them. Many of her bishops and archbishops had been not only men of high birth and station but men of great learning and eloquence, distinguished theologians and earnest workers in their respective dioceses. Her parish clergy were educated men, often wealthy men, with their whole time at their disposal to seek the religious and moral good of the people. Look again at the worshippers who gathered within the walls of the parish churches. To begin with, there were the Royal family, and all the great nobles of the land with their territorial and feudal influence; then there were the land-owning classes, as a whole, and the professional classes. In Suffolk one often heard the expression "The church is where 'the quality' go." There the rich were to be found. He was sorry to say that there was a good deal of truth in the saying that the carriage never stopped for three generations at the chapel door. Let them think, too, of the Church's social *status* and of all that that meant. And yet, gathering together all those points which he had only barely enumerated, they saw the astonishing fact that within the walls of the parish churches were to be found but a minority of the religious life of the country. The once forbidden, the long despised conventicles, the humble meeting houses, the Dissenters' chapels, now held more of the people than did the National churches. He asked the House to consider why there had been this great spiritual failure on the part of the National Church. He ventured to answer in the first place that her establishment by the State was largely answerable for it. Her connection with the State made her a worldly Church, a lordly and aristocratic Church, a political Church. [OPPOSITION cries of "No".] Some hon. Members said "no"; but how were the bishops appointed? They all knew that they were appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Prime Minister; and what was the Prime Minister of the country but a political officer and one naturally favouring appointments according to the views of the political Party in power? They also knew that the Prime Minister might not even be a Christian man, as had occurred in our past history and might happen again. Then in regard to the clergy, again came in the politician. The bishops, politically appointed as he had shown, had a large number of livings at their disposal, and their appointments thus became political appointments. [OPPOSITION cries of "No"] The Lord Chancellor had a large number of livings in his gift, and what was the Lord Chancellor—the head of the legal profession? Was not his appointment to the high office he filled the gift of the Party in power. Was not he a politician? He gave his appointments naturally with some reference to the colour of his political Party. He doubted not that many hon. Members had received, like himself, applications asking them if they had any influence with the Prime Minister or Lord Chancellor to get certain persons appointed to livings. Then the great landowners had a large number of livings which they regarded as a kind of family perquisite. They were an appendage to the aristocracy, and their best livings were often bestowed on their younger sons. Again, some livings were actually bought and sold in the market! Purchase had gone in the Army, but it still remained in the Church. Oh, the shame of it! What could be more contrary to the teaching of the New Testament than the state of things he had outlined? What godly Churchman did not blush when he thought of these things? Well might a Church, thus tied to the world and its influences, lose touch with spiritual people and also lose her spiritual power. And then, forsooth, this thus enfeebled Church assumed, because of its State connection, an air of ascendency over other Churches founded on simple New Testament lines. The spirit of ascendency begotten of the State connection was, he believed, one of the greatest barriers between the National Church and the people's hearts. Why was a clergyman in England called a "parson?" This was a popular corruption of the word "person." The State had made the clergyman in each parish *the person.* He used by right of this to take the chair at all parish meetings. It had given him powers and privileges which, human nature being what it was, had led many a parson to be among the people, not as "he that serveth," the true Christian ideal, but as "he that ruleth," as one "set over them." He believed that this spirit of ascendency was largely responsible for the alienation of so many of the people from the Church. That they were so alienated in the rural villages where the Church should be strongest, many hon. Members had evidence of in the meetings held in connection with the enfranchisement of the labourers, and with the first election in which they took part. Few had attended more such meetings than he did in 1884–5. He was astonished at what he had personally seen at those meetings. Nothing stirred the passions of the labourers like allusions to the parsons. Nothing pleased them so much as pitching into the parsons. He witnessed this himself in Suffolk, the county in which he had lived all his life, and a division of which he now represented for the third time in this House. In Suffolk if anywhere, the Church should have the enthusiastic support of the people. The county used to be called "Holy Suffolk," because of the large number of churches and religious houses in it. There was a proverbial and true saying that one was never out of sight of a church in Suffolk. What of the parish clergymen when the question of the labourers' enfranchisement was being discussed? One would have thought that they would have looked to the labourers as their children, and would have been desirous of lifting them up. But the clergy, as a whole, were strongly opposed to the enfranchisement of the labourers. There were a few brilliant exceptions, but these were regarded as traitors by their brethren. The votes of the labourers at that first election, as at this last election, had confirmed the feelings shown at the early meetings. In the Eastern countries then and now nearly all Liberals were returned for the county constituencies, which had returned nearly all Tories before for fifty years. The question of disestablishment, he felt confident, would have come up in the first Parliament which the labourers helped to elect (that chosen in 1885) if the Irish question which was connected with still greater grievances, had not unexpectedly cropped up and occupied the field. Judging the question by the light of the actual facts staring them in the face to-day, was it not plain that alike in the interest of religion, and of the State, it was desirable that ere many years were passed the so-called National Church, no longer the Church of the people, should be disestablished and disendowed? By disestablishment, freedom would be restored to the Church to manage her own affairs, and to put an end to abuses which many good Churchmen abhorred. By disendowment the tithes would be restored again to the use of all the people for such purposes as they might themselves determine. Modern endowments would not, of course, be touched, nor life interests. Nobody dreamt of touching them. He hoped he had not said anything offensive to those who differed from his views. He had wished to avoid doing so, and if he had not succeeded he apologised for it. His only desire was to state the actual facts. From the bottom of his heart he could say, "God bless every Church engaged in trying to lift up Christ, and so to lift up the people." There was ample room for all of them. Godly Churchmen need have no fear as to the result of the disestablishment and disendowment of the National Church. It had been tried in Ireland since 1869. What was the testimony of a much respected Member of this House, the late Colonel Saunderson? Speaking at Dublin on 7th October, 1898, he said—

> "The Irish Church received, as we thought, a very sad blow twenty-eight years ago when it was disestablished and disendowed. Although I voted against that measure at the time, yet, if I could, I would now undo that vote; for I believe that the Irish Church is stronger and more spiritual to-day than it was ever before."

He hoped that his hon. friends opposite would take notice of that remarkable statement. So, doubtless, would it be with the English Church in both England and Wales. All that was good in her would remain—yes, and be strengthened. The churches would remain, the ministers' houses would remain, every clergyman who wished to do good would remain. The tithes would remain to be used as the people desired. Cut loose from bondage to Courts and Parliaments, relying alone on Heavenly influences, and the love of its sons and daughters, and purified in a second Reformation, the Church as a spiritual body would be strengthened. With the free management of her own affairs the Church would become a power for good such as it had never been before. Then, in equal brotherhood with all Christian Churches, might they hope to see brought about the fulfilment of the beautiful prayer so often offered within these walls, for—

> "The uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within this realm in true Christian love and charity one towards another."

Might God hasten that in his time. He begged to move.

*Mr. GODDARD (Ipswich) said he rose to second the Resolution, and in doing so he felt that he had no light task, because while he had very strong convictions upon the importance of bringing such a question as this before Parliament, he was aware that there were many Members of Parliament who really felt strongly and earnestly against such a Motion, and that there were many, equally loyal to truth as themselves, who were as convinced in their inmost consciences that Establishment was the mainstay of religion in our land, as they were convinced that it was its palsy and its curse. This knowledge made the task a hard one. He would have preferred that this Motion had been in a somewhat different form, as it was put on the Order Paper by the late Mr. Miall, viz., "That in the opinion of this House the establishment by law of the Church of England involves a violation of religious equality, deprives that Church of the right of self-government, imposes on Parliament duties which it is incompetent to discharge, and is hurtful to the religious and political interests of the community, and therefore ought no longer to be maintained," for he based his support of the Resolution on the broad principle of justice and religious equality. He did not think it was the business of the State to take any cognizance of the religious opinions of its subjects. He claimed for every individual in the State the right to hold and to proclaim his faith, without interference by the civil power, and he further claimed that no man should, by reason of his religious opinions, be either harmed or advantaged, by the State; while for religious communities he claimed, in the words of Maclaren, that as regards the State—

> "*All* shall stand on one level, alike unhindered, unmeddled with, unpatronised, and left free to carry on their own proper work with their own proper power."

Hence, as a necessary step towards religious equality, he desired to see the special relation of control and support established between the State and one of the Churches in England ended. He wished at the outset to say he had no enmity to the Episcopal Church as a Church, nor any desire to injure the Church or to limit her powers for good. On the contrary, his belief and his hope was that the Church, with its great learning, its wonderful organisation, its wealth and its zeal, would, if set free from the trammels of State control, become a greater power for good. He might fairly claim that the principle of political equality was the accepted principle of modern legislation, and that the days of privilege were doomed. The merest glance over the legislation of the last fifty years would show that it had consisted largely of the removal of exceptional distinctions, and the application of the principle of the equal rights of all. Even in the Established Church this principle had been operating. They had seen Catholic emancipation, which gave civil rights to Roman Catholics; they had seen the Parliamentary oath so altered as to admit Protestant Dissenters, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Jews and Agnostics to the floor of the House; they had seen compulsory Church rates abolished; they had seen considerable advance in establishing religious equality in the graveyard; they had seen religious tests abolished at the Universities; they had seen the disestablishment of the Protestant Established Church in Ireland; and they had seen religious equality established in the Colonies. There remained to put the final touch to this record of progressive reform by establishing religious equality in the old country. At present that was withheld, and it constituted a grave injustice. As Dr. Maclaren once said—

> "Privilege and injustice are two names for the same thing according to the point of view: if you are inside the circle the circumference is concave, if you are outside it is convex."

They could not perch one man on an artificial elevation without taking the materials for his little mound off the general level. The direct effect of the religious inequality set up by an Established Church was to throw the nation into hostile camps and to infuse bitterness into the relations of neighbours in every parish. To quote again—

> "It puts one half the nation into a situation in which they must be angels not to be arrogant, and the other in a situation in which they must be saints not to be either truculent or servile; the Churchman stands on his dignity, the Dissenter bristles up for his right; the one regards Salem Chapel as the haunt of unauthorised poachers; the other is apt to regard Saint Simon's as the House of Rimmon. Widow Jones shall have no church soup—not a drop—if she goes to chapel; Widow Smith shall have no chapel coals, be her old bones ever so cold, if she goes to church."

How could such a state of things promote national unity? The strength of a nation depended upon the harmony and union which prevailed among its component parts, but wherever there had been a State Church history taught, and the experience of all foreign lands confirmed it, that there was cleavage running from top to bottom through every class of the nation. That was a necessity of Church establishment, the division was always present, though not always offensively manifest in our larger towns, but in the country districts that division existed and hampered the work of every public institution and every private charity. There were many positions where churchmanship was a qualification, where the first question asked was "Is he a Churchman or a Dissenter"—such positions as the governor of a gaol, the chief of the police, the teacher in a grammar school and even in an elementary school, a matron of a hospital, even the porter in a village workhouse. It was a deplorable weakness in our national life, and he verily believed that if religious equality had free play all those injustices would be destroyed. Then one could not forget how that religious inequality affected national progress, because of the existence in the State of a vast ecclesiastical organisation which always threw its weight into the scale in favour of reactionary measures. It would scarcely be denied that the influence of the Established Church as a whole had been against popular progress. If that statement needed confirmation he would only ask them to look at the votes of the Bench of Bishops for the last fifty years or more. It was true that almost everything they opposed had since been done, but it was equally true that they had opposed all the measures that were now universally accepted as good—Catholic emancipation; the removal of Jewish disabilities; the rights of Nonconformists; Reform Bills; the Ballot; the justice of the peace qualifications; the 1884 Franchise Bill; parish councils; social legislation; reform of the marriage laws; and the labour movement. When Sir Samuel Romilly tried to soften the horrors of the barbarous criminal code which hung men by the dozen for trivial offences against property, he was met by the hostility of the bishops, and when Wilberforce sought to abolish the slave trade the Church threw its sanction over the right of property in man. He freely admitted there were noble exceptions. He had not forgotten the protest of one bishop against the game of grab in the Education Bill of 1902, but on the whole the tendency had been in the direction he had described. Why? He could not find the reason in the men.

They were animated by the same natural sympathies as themselves. It would not be found in the religion which they professed. They must seek the reason in the institution, and the State Church had been an institution for the sanction of political injustice and for the perpetuation of political abuses. Therefore he contended that on the grounds of national unity and national progress it must be clear that religious inequality as represented by an Established Church had been a failure and a hindrance. He desired to say a word on the disendowment part of the Resolution. He had come across many Churchmen who would agree with disestablishment but drew the line at disendowment. When they attacked the Establishment they were said to be laying sacrilegious hands upon the National Church, and when they spoke of the appropriation of the money they were said to be confiscating private property and the funds of a private corporation. He must not enter upon the nature and origin of Church property. That had been settled by the precedent of the Irish Church. That Act settled the fact that the property of a Church in connection with the State might be dealt with by the State and applied to such public uses as the State might determine. The fact was the State had always dealt with endowments. That principle had been accepted in the case of charities; of endowed schools, in cases connected with the Ecclesiastical Commission, and in cases of changes made in trusts upon which funds were held. The State had never abrogated its right in this respect, and whenever the nation should decide that the existence of the Church as a department of the State ought to cease, then the nation would have the clear right to say to what other public and national purposes the property which the Church now enjoyed should be appropriated. Of course all private benefactions would remain untouched and all life interests safeguarded and respected. He did not believe that disestablishment would be harmful to the Church. On the contrary, he believed the gain would be considerable. She would have time to deal with the alleged wrong practices of which they heard so much, and she would also gain by doing away with the source of many scandals, such as the sale of livings and the right of private patronage. She would have the right to manage her own affairs. All this could only tend to greater purity and usefulness of the Church. That had been proved by the case of the Irish Church. Lord Plunkett, Bishop of Meath, and afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, had said of the Irish Church that the very disaster which threatened their downfall had been overruled for their good; and if further evidence was required of the benefits of disestablishment it could be found in the opinion expressed by many Churchmen, as the following quotation from the *Christian World* of 31st January would show—

> "ONE RESULT OF DISESTABLISHMENT.—That disestablishment distinctly brings the Episcopal Church into closer and more fraternal relations with other Protestant communions there is abundant witness in the Colonies. All barriers are not at once removed, but the fact that all Churches are on the same footing in the eye of the the State does tell. At the present time this more friendly relationship in both America and Australia is tending strongly towards reunion. At the recent Church Congress in Melbourne, representing the whole of Australia, proposals were made for coalition with the Presbyterians. Dr. Lowther Clarke, Archbishop of Melbourne, who presided over the Congress, was also president of a subsequent conference which discussed not merely a union of Anglicans and Presbyterians, but a union of all Protestant bodies to found a united Church of Australia. The Archbishop, writing hopefully of this in a letter to England, remarks that Anglicans 'live on the most friendly terms with all the other religious bodies (except Rome), and do much common work.' He points out how much freer and stronger the Church is in Australia because it is not established and has the power of self-government."

It was because he believed that by greater freedom the Church would become a greater force for good, and because the establishment of the principle of religious equality would promote national unity and national progress, that he seconded the Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the interests alike of religion and the nation, it is desirable to disestablish and disendow the Church of England both in England and Wales."—(*Mr. Everett.*)

*SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devonshire, Honiton) said he desired as an Amendment to leave out all words after "that" and substitute, "In the opinion of this House, the passing of any measure to destroy the national position which the Church of England has held for so many centuries, and to secularise her ancient endowments, would grievously impede her great and growing work for the spiritual and social welfare of the people and would be a serious blow to the cause of religion and morality in the nation." It was because he believed those words from his heart that he put down the Amendment. No question could have more far-reaching effects for good or evil than the proposals submitted to the House that evening. The hon. Member for Woodbridge had proposed the disestablishment and disendowment of the national Church. He could not dismiss the question with the brevity which the hon. Member suggested, because a very serious question had been raised, a question with regard to which much misunderstanding prevailed. The hon. Gentleman made a very startling statement when he spoke of funds which belonged to all being appropriated by Parliament. The idea seemed to be that Parliament was the mover. It was the idea of Mr. Miall whose Motion in that House he heard thirty-six years ago. That Gentleman objected to the Church as being an institution set up to Christianise the people of the country, one which aimed at securing a national unity of belief, uniformity of worship, and identity of religious teaching by the clergy, and claimed the exclusive right to appropriate the national resources. The idea was widely prevalent that at some time or other the State established the Church and devoted public funds for the purpose. Since Mr. Miall moved his Motion a great deal of light had been thrown on the question by Professor Freeman. He had clearly shown that the Church had a history before the Crown was settled, before the British Constitution was formulated, and before Parliament existed, and that the Church was, for centuries, the sole representative and exponent of the Christianity of the people of this country. She never became Roman. She was corrupted by contact with Rome, and after the Reformation she returned to the old paths. She was the same Church as regarded identity, continuity, and succession as before, and was no more affected by the changes that then took place than the Crown or Parliament. The phrase "Church of England as by law established" did not mean that she was created by the State or by any human law whatever. It only meant that her constitution, doctrine, and liturgy, having been drawn up and agreed to by her own representatives, received the sanction of the State. Parliament has settled what ministers shall be allowed to hold livings, what oaths they shall take, and on what conditions individual clergymen shall be allowed to receive institution to temporalities. As to the property of the Church, there had been no simultaneous endowment of Church property. The property of the several local churches were given by one and another individual at various times. Regarding tithes there was an impression that they were voted by Parliament to the Church, but tithes were payments of very ancient times appropriated by different landowners to different churches in which they felt interested. Parliament never created tithes, never imposed them. She did not impose them or collect them. Shortly, there was never any particular moment when the State endowed one general religious body calling itself the Church of England. Still less was there any idea of the State taking property from one Church body and handing it to another. If then Parliament never established the Church in the sense of singling it out from others for its especial favour, if it had simply recognised it as the historical and mother Church of England; if it had never appointed its clergy, provided its places of worship, or voted funds for its maintenance, where did the right come in to pull down that which it had never set up, and to appropriate endowments given by private individuals? They disputed the right of Parliament to do such a thing as that, but they did not dispute its power. But Parliament had never interfered and did not interfere with trust property unless that trust property had ceased to perform the objects for which the trust was created. Could that be said in the case of the Church? Could it be said that the Church had been resting on its oars and enjoying its endowments, and doing nothing in the great work of the nation? It was alleged that the Church was not carrying out her trust, but the returns showed that the voluntary offerings of her members for Church purposes amounted to £7,768,410 last year. That was the dying Church! That sum excluded missionary work, Bible Society work, and other work; and, in spite of the lurid picture drawn by the seconder of the Motion, they were working with their Nonconformist brethren on the great Sunday and other questions. From the figure he had given was of course excluded all the grants made by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. There was also the expenditure on schools and rescue work, and he could assure the House that it was not merely in spiritual but in the temporal matters of the people and in the social work of the day that the Church was actively engaged. He instanced the funds collected in London for Hospital Sunday—£35,472 given by the Church out of a total of £44,633. The hon. Member for Ipswich had stated that the Church was opposed to education. Since the foundation of the National Society £47,000,000 had been raised by the Church for the purpose of education. Was it not the fact that many men in that House, but for the Church would not have had schools to which to go? The Church was the founder of schools, and she was never more capable of carrying on the work nor more full of devotion to it, though she was not so rich and comfortable as the hon. Member had said. Never was she so deep in the affections of the people as at the present time. Even the Founder of our religion was not able to do all that he wished, and because the Church had not made the nation wholly religious, was it to be said, therefore, that she had failed in her work? The same might be said of any other Church. Then came the question as to the discipline of the Church. He had the honour of serving on the Commission which had inquired very closely into the question of the practices of omission and commission, and no doubt they had been bound to report that there were clergy who refused to obey the law. There were churches in which the services were very little distinguished from those of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the congregations who supported them. But what he was happy to think was that the opinion of the Commission was that these cases were few in number compared with the whole body of the Church, and they came unanimously to the conclusion that the evidence gave no reason to doubt that in the large majority of parishes the work of the Church was being quietly and diligently performed by clergy who were loyal to the principles of the English Reformation as expressed in the Articles of the Book of Common Prayer. Much was being done which could not find its way into the newspapers, but in regard to the practices to which he referred, the firm hand of the Episcopate was succeeding in doing a great deal. It was suggested that it was for the benefit of the Church that she should be disestablished and disendowed—that practically she should be turned out into the cold. But although the Commission found that the position of the Church was too narrow for the religious life of the present day, they ventured to indicate how, while maintaining the control of Parliament, some self-adjustment might be secured. He was happy to think that His Majesty's Government had realised the reasonableness of the suggestion which had been made to them, and that they had granted Letters to Convocation to see if any agreement could be come to which might be submitted to Parliament. The serious thing was that, supposing the Church were disestablished and disendowed, how were they going to fill the gaps which would be made? The hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division had pointed with great pride to the number of Sunday schools which, no doubt, were a strong feature of Nonconformist bodies, and whose work was of the highest character. But how stood Nonconformity among the poorer portions of the population now? He would mention an instance given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who took the poorest parts of South London In three deaneries there were 137 resident clergy. There were alongside of them only thirty-two chapels with thirteen ministers. In the parish of Bermondsey there was for some time not a single resident Nonconformist minister. In country places, if they destroyed the Church or crippled her so that she could not be carried on, how were the gaps to be filled? In Somersetshire, out of 520 parishes there was no public worship, except in the

Church of England, in 195, and in 400 of them there was no resident ministers except Church of England clergyman. Wales was included. They declined to make any difference between the Churches of England and Wales, and they would resist to the utmost any attempt to lop off part of the Church. They were very much indebted to hon. Members opposite for the Commission granted by the Government to inquire into the Welsh Church, for that inquiry was showing the enormous increase of Church life in Wales in every sense. He entirely repudiated the statement of the hon. Member for Ipswich that the Church was opposed to everything good, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would read the Archbishop's refutation of almost every word he had said. They little thought how big a thing they asked to be undertaken. Mr. Gladstone said what an enormous effort it was to disestablish the Church of Ireland, and he pitied the man who undertook the disestablishment of the Church of England. They were asked, in these days of the worship of materialism and the spread of new theologies, and of popular aspirations which needed guidance, to hamper, harass, and cripple the Church, which was pre-eminently the Church of the poor, in the sense that the poor man had the right to her service without payment. They were asked to deal a blow at the parochial system, of which Mr. Booth said, "The churches most successful are most parochial." They were asked to deal a blow at a system which gave to every man, woman and child in the Kingdom the right to spiritual ministrations without payment. Action of this sort would be a blow to Christianity not only in this country, but in every part of the world. He would conclude by quoting words of one of the ablest and most liberal of Prelates, Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham—

> "Nonconformists would gather very little of the spoils, but irreligion and atheism would be the real gainers;"

and of Lord Selborne. who said that disestablishment might not be national apostacy! but it would work serious national mischief.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton) in seconding the Amendment, said he wished it to be understood that he was not responsible for its terms, and did not acquiesce in all the arguments of the hon. Baronet. It was on motives of deep principle rather than details that he proposed to address the House. The question they had to consider was whether it was desirable to terminate the institution of the Church as a portion of the national heritage. He acknowledged the failure of the Church to be a leader of political liberty, and perhaps one explanation of that fact was that the Church had been deserted by many of the best people who might otherwise have kept it right. But that had nothing whatever to do with the principle whether it was wise for the nation to retain the National Church. Some hon. Members on his side argued that the Church was favoured by being a National Church, while others said it was a drawback to be a National Church. Something might be said for both propositions; but both could not be argued at once, and his hon. friends, to use a sporting phrase, should declare with which horse they meant to win. The duty of a National Church—he did not say it was always done, that was another matter—was to be an institution which offered the ministrations of religion to all without forcing them upon any. It was an offering institution. It was like a public fountain: they might drink or not just as they chose for nothing. The first condition of such a Church was that it must carry with it a certain amount of genuine national sentiment. That was why he had strongly advocated the disestablishment of the Church in Wales and in Ireland. In England the Establishment did carry with it a certain amount of national approval. It did not follow that it should have a majority of the nation as worshippers. Judged by that test, all the churches now would cut rather a sorry figure. Therefore it was not a question of whether it would be good for the Church to be disestablished; he was thinking of the nation. That the Church would prosper if separated from the State he had no doubt, but a larger and more important question was what would happen to the religious life of the nation outside all the churches?

What was the idea of the parochial system? The idea of the parochial system was that there should be no man without some church to which he had a right to go and some minister whose services he could claim. The voluntary churches were doing a wonderful work, but they could not be expected to minister to the religious necessities of the nation as a whole. They had enough to do to look after their own adherents. The nation ought to think very seriously before it broke with the idea that there should be some institution responsible for ministering to the religious life of the great masses of the people who did not care for any particular church or chapel. Who was it who wanted looking after? Not the people who were prepared to go to a church or a chapel and pay; they were safe, as it were, already. The people Parliament ought to be anxious about were the people who did not care for any religion and would not pay for any. The present was a democratic age, and the idea of a National Church was democratic. In the education controversy it was generally felt that the national could not dispense with religious instruction. He believed it was also felt that it was not safe to trust to mere chance the religious welfare of the nation as a whole. Great nations were not made out of cotton, coal, or iron, but out of men and women, and one of the most essential elements of their greatness was the influence of religion. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out from the word 'the,' to the end of the Question, and add the words, 'opinion of this House, the passing of any measure to destroy the national position which the Church of England has held for so many centuries, and to secularise her ancient endowments, would grievously impede her great and growing work for the spiritual and social welfare of the people and would be a serious blow to the cause of religion and morality in the nation.'"—(*Sir John Kennaway*).

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said his hon. friend the Member for Bolton had endeavoured in the speech he had just delivered to formulate his idea of what constituted a national establishment of religion. He was much interested in his definition. He had described the Church of England as a kind of universal theological provider for the nation, open to all and controlled by all. If, indeed, he seriously meant that as a definition of the present position of the Church of England, then he himself, as a Churchman, could only regret that he could not feel that the House had yet found a satisfactory formula for an Established Church. The Secretary of State for War in his speech on Monday upon the Army said the Volunteer organisation was the most confusing thing in the British Constitution. He was inclined to think that the right hon. Gentleman had overlooked the Church of England. As a Churchman he freely confessed that all that had been said by the mover and seconder of the Motion as to the anomalies of the Constitution between Church and State was true, and he did not think they were more keenly felt by anyone than by those who were members of the Church of England. The position of the Church of England was indeed unique: the laity of the Church of England had no constitutional position in the Church as apart from the State. Parliament was the trustee of the laity of the Church of England. That House was, to put it at the lowest, a joint trustee for the Church of England. It was rather a curious trustee. It was not altogether favourable to the Church of England. He did not think that it could be called altogether impartial, but for good or evil it was the trustee for the laity of the Church of England. Therefore, they had this anomalous position that while the Church of England did not provide that kind of theology which suited everybody in this country, the adherents of every kind of religion had a perfect right to be represented in the House and to have a controlling voice in the destinies of the National Church. The bishops and many of the superior dignitaries of the Church of England were appointed by the Crown on the advice of Ministers. They had this curious result, that a Scottish Presbyterian and a Scottish Episcopalian divided between them the full control of the destinies of that Church. That was only one more tribute, if tribute were required, to the genius of Scotsmen for combining high office with an adequate sense of honour. The bishops and clergy of the Church were bound by the Articles and Prayer-book. There were no more elastic documents than the Prayer-book and Articles of the Church of England, and yet they had not been found sufficiently elastic to satisfy a considerable section of the clergy of the Church. The clergy of the Church of England had found in these Articles and in the Prayer-book a variety of meanings and an extension of meanings which he ventured to say those who compiled them never anticipated, and at the result of which they would be aghast if they saw it as it existed to-day. Speaking as a Churchman he did not know anything more disquieting to those who were accustomed to the phrase introduced by the mover of the Resolution—the Protestant Reformed religion as established by law.

*MR. EVERETT: It is so called in the Coronation Oath.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR said he quite accepted it as a Constitutional description of the National Church, but when contrasted with the actual position of the Church and the attitude of those who held high office in it towards the word Protestant, could it be any longer maintained that the Church of England was fulfilling its duty as a trustee of the Protestant religion of this country? The mover of the Amendment had alluded to the Royal Commission which had recently reported, and quoted the final words of their Report which asserted that the majority of the clergy were doing their duty in strict loyalty to the principles of the Reformation. They had been told during recent discussions upon the fiscal question that what they were to consider was not the statics but the dynamics of trade. He would apply the same reasoning to the Church of England. He ventured to say he was right when he held that the clergy alluded to in the Report of the Commission as practising ceremonies and innovations not to be distinguished from those of the Church of Rome marked a dynamical tendency in the Church which showed that they were but the advance guard of a considerable army waiting to assist them. A prominent high Churchman—Mr. Lathbury—in his evidence upon the subject of discipline in the Church of England, frankly admitted to the Commission that these clergy could not obey the Ecclesiastical Courts because they did not approve of their constitution, and they could not obey the Bishops because the subject-matter of the Bishops' decisions ought to be referred to the Courts. That was a circular mode of treating an ecclesiastical difficulty which secured the maximum of freedom. He did not think it was too much to say that many of these clergy acknowledged no control, lay or ecclesiastical, neither of bishops nor of Parliament, and that their own ordination oath was reduced and made void of meaning because they themselves claimed to be the sole interpreters of the Prayer-book which they had undertaken to respect. To any Churchman who believed that the Church was orignially laid at the time of the Reformation on a Protestant foundation, the prospect in the Church was most disquieting and could not last, It was an anomaly which cried aloud for a remedy, and whatever that remedy might be he was confident that Parliament could not for long allow the present position to last. The remedy that had been proposed that night by the mover and seconder of the Motion wa in brief to "cut the painter" and allow the Church to go its own way. That looked comparatively easy on paper. The Church and the State were to go apart and to move, let them hope, on parallel lines. They were to have, if not a free Church in a free State, a variety of free Churches from which the State would perhaps eventually succeed in getting free. But this remedy was one which, he thought, the Liberal Party should consider well before they put it into immediate operation. What had led to the position in the Church of England to which he had just alluded? The Bishops were appointed by the Prime Minister of the day. The first Prime Minister who entrenched the High Church Party in the high places of the Church of England was not a Tory Prime Minister but a Liberal Prime

Minister, a great Churchman—the late Mr. Gladstone. If the Liberal Party, through Mr. Gladstone, had been responsible, in a certain degree, for the position of things in the Church of England, then he thought they ought to redress the balance before they "cut the painter" and deprived the boat of its means of propulsion and of a considerable portion of its ballast. He humbly suggested to the Prime Minister of the day that he should redress the balance in the Church of England by appointing bishops and dignitaries faithful to the foundation principles of the Reformation before he summarily terminated the connection between Church and State, and left Churchmen to manage their differences as best they might. As a Churchman he did not believe that the Church of England was capable of great injury at the hands of the Parliament of this country. Whatever happened, Churchmen would always recollect that the Church of England was a spiritual organisation—a fact which, he thought, the mover and seconder of the Resolution freely recognised. They knew as well as Churchmen that the Church of England could not receive a mortal stroke at the hands of the State, because, whatever might be her complexion theologically, she had that spiritual vitality which was bound to assert itself. He felt that strongly, and, more than that, he felt that if disestablishment were to come, the prospect was not necessarily disconcerting to the Protestant Churchman, because a Church body would be formed, and he presumed that, whatever might be done about disendowment, the Church body would receive whatever Parliament chose to give it. He believed that on that Church body the lay element of the Church of England, which was now incapable of proper assertion, would find its due and proper weight. He believed it was entirely opposed to those extreme and undesirable practices to which such grave exception had been taken, and on balance the forecast of disestablishment had less terrors to the Protestant Churchman than to any other section of opinion in that body. While he held that very strongly he still felt that the complete severance of Church and State was not a remedy which he himself, as a Churchman, would be anxious to apply under present conditions. He felt that the Liberal Party, to a certain extent, was responsible for the existing position of affairs in the Church. As regarded the immediate Resolution and Amendment before the House, he would abstain from taking any part, either *pro* or *con.* As one who desired that the Church should retain its original Protestant character, he would wait to see the results of the efforts now being made to re-establish her on a truly Protestant basis before he committed himself; but he hoped, though with considerable anxiety, that the Church, with her inherent vitality, would emerge from the present crisis to influence the religious and national welfare of the country.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.) said that he would detain the House but a very short time, though he thought the subject lent itself to discursive treatment. He was sure that so long as the House thought fit to appropriate a good deal of its time, at all events in the early part of the session, to the discussion of abstract Resolutions, no one could wonder that a question so important, which attracted so much interest, and which excited so much discussion in the country, should claim a right to be heard for a few hours on an evening of that kind. He had difficulty in approaching the question within the limits he had imposed on himself, for he held, and to his mind it seemed, that the whole question of Church establishment was one which demanded somewhat philosophic treatment, and, even in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition he felt rather a shy philosopher. It had always seemed to him difficult to maintain argumentatively the existence of a Church establishment except upon one or two understandings. Of course if everybody in the nation had one and the same religion, if they all thought alike on questions of Church government and questions of religious doctrine, then an Established Church would hardly be a necessity, for the nation, when worshipping or when turning to things spiritual, would be a nation and a Church, and, although no doubt the nation could endow its own religion, still there would be no difference between the two; the Church and the nation would be identical. But unhappily in this country, as in most others, unity of faith was hopelessly destroyed, at all events at present, shattered into ten thousand fragments. He could never bring himself to speak lightly of religious difficulties and divisions or to treat the matter as of no account, saying, "Why should not a good Churchman and a good Baptist, for instance, recognise that their differences are of so slender a character as to enable them to worship side by side." They could not do it, because of the vitality and reality of their differences. Even in the Church of England itself unity of faith was shattered. He did not know any other church where there was such a strong difference of opinion, cutting as it did deep into the life of individuals, as the difference between the two historical sections, as each was entitled to be called, which composed the Church of England. It was a difference as vital and as real as between Nonconformists themselves, and perhaps more so. Then they had all the Nonconformist bodies and the Church of Rome, a Nonconformist body in this country, and all the other sects and denominations. That aspect of the case then was hopelessly impossible. Then there was the other aspect of the case, one that at one time was held by the State which declared of a particular Church, "This is the true Church and you must belong to it or stand completely outside, and be subject to the pains and penalties of such a position." He believed that our ancestors in the reign of Queen Elizabeth always recognised the right of the people to think. He did not discover in the writings of divines and philosophers of the period any strong view denying the right of the people to think as they chose; but their right to organise or to express opinions in a definite form of public worship they, of course, did regularly and vigorously dispute. They took the view that the Church of England as by law established was the true Church, and that the people ought to be, and were, bound to belong to it. He always sympathised very much with Mr. Gladstone who, after having written a remarkable book, in his early years, on Church Establishment, and having supported it on that ground, withdrew, temporarily, at all events, from the Government, because he felt himself unable to subscribe to the annual grant to Maynooth. Mr. Gladstone argued—

> "How can I write a book maintaining the right of the Church of England, even although not the Church of the majority, to maintain its established position—how can I assert the privileges of a State Church to that character, and yet vote a grant in Parliament for the education of the priests of the Roman Catholic Church, whose bounden duty it is to teach that the Church of England is heretical, and that salvation is not to be found within its pale?"

He thought that was a sound and correct position. But if they did not adopt either of those views—and he knew no one who did—he was at a loss to understand how it was possible to justify the continued establishment of one Church in this community. There was a time, as he could remember as a boy—perhaps they were sleepy days in the opinion of many people—when the Church of England was by no means so far separated from the great body of religious opinion in this country as she now was. He could remember as a Nonconformist in Liverpool how intimately, on some occasions, they were associated with the Church of England. There was one annual occasion that he remembered not with absolute joy—the annual meeting of the Bible Society. His father was one of the secretaries, as a Nonconformist, and a clergyman of the Church of England was another, and they used to get on very well together. They always had the Bishop of the diocese in the chair; and there was a great deal of nice talk about how pleasant it was for brethren to meet together in unity for the circulation of the Word of God. He remembered that when the Bishop of Chester died—he was a good, sensible Cambridge man, and used to preside on these occasions—his place was filled by an Oxford man, a very good man indeed, and as much of a Liberal as was consistent with having acted as secretary to Mr. Gladstone's election committee in the University of Oxford. He referred to Dr. Jacobson. When he came to Liverpool, his father wrote to him the usual letter to take the chair at the annual meeting of the Bible Society; and he remembered very well that the reply was a curt and not over-courteous refusal and that refusal many of the other Bishops had since rigorously observed. He was far from saying that no Bishop now took the chair at these joint meetings of the Bible Society; but he said the occasions were much rarer now than in times gone by. He asserted without hesitation, quite apart from that mere incident which he had given from his own recollection, that the gulf now fixed between what he would call Nonconformist opinion and the prevailing opinion of the Church of England was greater than it ever was. He did not wonder that it should be so, and he did not complain of it; because doctrinal differences were vital, they cut deep down into our religious life; and it would be mere affectation if the High Church clergy or laity were not to give full effect and emphasis to them. That being so, they could not any longer rely upon the quieter times of the past when people used to go to chapel in the morning and to church in the evening, or *vice versa*; and when there were between the Evangelical clergymen of the Church of England and the various Nonconformist bodies—he would not say very cordial relations, but, at all events, sufficiently cordial relations to enable Christians to dwell together in outward unity. He thought, therefore, it was impossible now, on any philosophical basis whatever, to justify the continuance of an Established Church in this country. The hon. Member for Bolton seemed to speak of the Established Church as being a very desirable thing, because it provided everybody who had not got a religion of his own with a church to which he could go when inclined or a clergyman for whom he could send when he was *in articulo mortis*. That was a poor defence of an Established Church. It could only be justified on the assumption that the Established Church was a broad and colourless church—he would not use the expression "a Cowper-Temple Church" lest he should revive a discussion with which he had no longer any concern. That was the sort of notion which many men and some writers like Matthew Arnold had had; and he admitted that in certain moods he had had a kind of sympathy with them. But he had felt the impossibility of it, because, after all, truth and conviction would persist in coming in and breaking up this imaginary solution of all our religious differences by blending them in one harmonious and colourless whole. Therefore, he thought the conception of providing an educated clergyman of mild opinions and pleasant habits who would obey their call and go to them when they were ill, and a church into which they could drop when they were not playing billiards, was a conception of religion which, having regard to the gravity of the subject, was not worthy to be maintained. He thought that the speeches they heard from the mover and seconder were very remarkable. It was a stale subject; the Resolution had been often moved; but the speeches of his hon. friends showed that it was a live subject, because they had not repeated

Mr. Birrell.

the same stale arguments they had heard before. They had spoken in the language of to-day; they represented the feelings of to-day and not the transmitted arguments of the past. He assumed from their speeches that there was no bitterness in their claim, no social ambition which was supposed to be at the bottom of a great deal of Nonconformist objections to the Church of England, but that they were really expressing what was present in the minds of many people —namely, a deep-rooted conviction that the Church did not do the State any good. He would certainly like to know some examples; and he would like to hear whether out of his historical knowledge his hon. friend could give him any example showing that by reason of its connexion with the State the Church has been able to do the State any good whatever in critical moments in our history when we were trembling on the verge of action since recognised as unjust. Could anyone honestly get up and cite an example when the State held its hand or was even bidden to hold its hand at the direction of priests of religion with whom it was officially connected? He was sure that to the State the connection had done nothing but harm. That was a proposition which was hardly to be denied. He said nothing about the mode of electing Bishops—every one knew how it was done—but he was rather surpised to hear the speech of the hon. Member for East Toxteth. The hon. Gentleman said, "Do not seek to disestablish the Church; try a better plan than that." And as Mr. Gladstone filled the episcopal bench with High Churchmen, he called upon his right hon. friend the Prime Minister to abandon that bad practice and to choose men of another kidney, to man the episcopal bench with good, sound Protestants. He thought that was a poor business. He believed the Church of England, when it came to elect its Bishops synodically, would be able to elect them every bit as learned, as pious, and as eloquent as any of the present occupants of the bench; and at the same time let them feel that they had been appointed by an ecclesiastical body for religious reasons and not in order to redress the balance, to keep things right, to keep a perpetual balance on the bench, in the phrase of Newman, as men who would always guarantee to steer their course between the Scylla and Charybdis of "Yes" or "No." Some persons thought that this would be a solution of the difficulty. It would be no solution, for his hon. friend would not get rid of the High Church party in the Church of England. He would not get rid of the Church of England of Archbishop Laud simply by looking about for men of a particular way of thinking and by putting them on the bench. To do so might posssibly accelerate disestablishment and hasten the time, but it would not prove to be any reasonable or proper solution of that great difficulty. Speaking entirely for himself he honestly believed that by passing the Resolution, so far from dealing the Church any blow as a spiritual body, it would free it, in the old-fashioned phrase, from the trammels of the State. He believed that it would restore, for the first time for many a long day, the Church to a position of stronger authority throughout the land As for destroying the Church, he thought he might leave that question to the consideration of the House. It had been said that he had attacked the Bishops. He had diligently searched among all the historians whose works were on his shelves or on those of a more extensive library, but he had not found a historian of our social and political progress whose estimate and general authority as to the value during the last 100 years of the work in another place of the bench of Bishops differed in any way materially from that which he had given to the House. He could find none. No doubt the Bishops in another place had shared the general up-rising of society. He was happy to say they were not so averse as they once were to social reform; but he owned that when he used the language he did he was speaking not so much of measures that stood a chance of being repealed. He was thinking of some other matters. He was thinking of the people who were the pioneers of great popular causes, of men who stood by the side of persons enduring the position of shame and contumely, and whose names were for ever gloriously associated, not in the hour of triumph, but in the hour of danger and difficulty. When he could not find the Bishops in that place—he did not dream that he had been held to blame them in their individual capacity, eminent and distinguished men as he knew many of them to be; but he did think it might be supposed that they had failed to alter the secular almosphere in the other place. The secular atmosphere in both Houses of Parliament was noticeable enough. One might spend one's life there without coming into active contact with the Christian religion. One would have thought that the Bishops would have interfered with some good result. If they had not modified the secular atmosphere of the House of Lords, it was only because they found their way within those walls in the manner prelates did. He therefore said that the Government had no intention of assuming any responsibility for a Resolution of this kind. Their hands were already full enough. They had work enough of their own to do. But he had no doubt that Liberal sentiment in this country, now and for many a long year, would more and more settle down, and would receive much support from members of the Church of England, in the deep-rooted conviction—and the time was long past when it could be doubted—that the Church of England, liberated from its connection with the State, would assume an authority and spiritual power surprising to its powerful supporters.

Mr. Birrell.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square) said the discursive and characteristic speech of the right hon. Gentleman made one remember that the right hon. Gentleman had been Minister for Education. It appeared to him during the effort he had made to follow the right hon. Gentleman's speech that his experience as Minister of Education seemed to have coloured his impression of the present position of the Church of England. He hardly agreed with anything the right hon. Gentleman had said, with the exception of the tribute he had paid to the mover and seconder of the original Resolution. He wished to express on behalf of himself and his friends their sense of the dignity and temperateness with which both hon. Gentlemen had performed their part. They had, however, spoken of things not as they were now, but as they had been, when they talked of the Church's "ascendancy" and "aristocratic character." The Church had utterly abandoned all pretensions of ascendancy, privilege and power. There were only two grounds on which the contrary could be maintained—the presence of the bishops in the House of Lords, and the conferring of legality on a marriage performed in the Church of England without further civil process. As far as the bishops' presence in the House of Lords was concerned, he did not think that many people would desire to exclude the divines of other Churches from that privilege. But it was argued that, because of the various opinions held in this country to-day on religious questions, the Church had no warrant to the peculiar prestige of association with the State. Scarcely any institution in the State could command the unanimous support of the people, except for a time. Even the Government was only temporarily the representative of the State or the majority of the State. Therefore, he did not think it was fair to say that the Church of England was not national simply because she did not represent all phases of the national thought. It might be asked why that should be denied to other churches which was accorded to the Church of England? His answer would be that those other churches did not demand association with the State, and there was no proposal for such a connection. He asked those hon. Members, and they were mostly on the other side, who looked at the present moment to the State and to civic virtue for the realisation of their ideals whether they should proceed to repudiate a Christian basis for the State, because that was what, in his judgment, disestablishment meant. Were they going to sever from the State the Church which had been for 1,500 years rooted in British soil, and was still august and erect, although she was not the sole custodian of the spirit which made for righteousness? Those who expected so much from the State and from civic virtue ought to be the last to dissociate from the State that Christian basis which, he believed, the vast majority of the people of this country desired it should have. He called to mind, in this connection, the appeal that was made by the right hon. Gentleman last session, in his last speech on the Education Bill, in which he pointed out to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway the profound debt which all those social aspirations and civic ideals owed to the Christian Church and to the Christian faith. Of such an institution, they should be the first to say that it would be wrong, being "so majestical, to offer to show it violence." If that were so of those who held those opinions and cherished those ideals, surely those who adhered to the doctrines of the Church of England, who saw year after year evidence of her greater vitality, energy, and force—he did not recognise, in fact he absolutely denied the very black picture the right hon. Gentleman opposite had painted of the divisions in the Church and between the Church and other Churches —and who saw in those doctrines the greatest and most elevating forces which existed at the present day, could not feel otherwise than that a repudiation of the connection of the Church with the State would be a blow to Christianity throughout the globe, and particularly to Christianity in this country. He did not like to pass over an argument which fell from the hon. Member for Ipswich, that there was a tendency in what he called the bonds of the doctrine of the Church, to stereotype existing religious opinion, and to obstruct the natural and healthy expansion of the religious spirit within its borders. That was a serious and weighty argument in theory, but it had no weight in practice, for the members of the Church of England and of other established Churches had generally succeeded in obtaining for themselves greater liberty than the members of the bodies which were called Free Churches, each of which stood very firmly by its Church's doctrines, and enforced them upon each other with an even greater vigour than did the members of the Church of England and other established Churches. There was greater expansion of the religious spirit, greater evolution, if he might so put it, of religious doctrines, in the Established Church, than in the Free Churches. Bishop Thirlwall, a distinguished and earnest man, said—

> "Whatever complaints may be heard among ourselves, and whatever reproaches may be made against us by our adversaries, with regard to our ecclesiastical system, to the bondage, as it is sometimes termed, of the Church, none can seriously allege that he meets with any impediments arising from this cause, which would seriously limit his usefulness, or restrain him from applying all his faculties to it, or preclude him from hoping for an abundant blessing on his work."

So much for disestablishment. But he was bound to say a word or two on disendowment. What did disendowment mean? It meant the appropriation by the State of funds which had been deliberately given for religious purposes and the allocation of those funds for new unintended and secular purposes. That, he thought, was the undeniable meaning of disendowment. He would like to test the validity of the argument as to disendowment by applying it, say, to the Baptists or to the Wesleyans. The Wesleyan body, for which he had the greatest possible respect, had funds amounting to about ten millions, which were devoted to religious uses. Would it be legitimate or justifiable for the State to appropriate those funds and devote them to any secular or charitable purpose? He did not think anybody would say so. Indeed to justify the alienation of any property of such a kind there would have to be an overwhelming case of the misapplication of those funds, and of abuse in the use of them, or they would have to have overwhelming evidence of the total effacement, or practically total effacement, of the objects for which they were given. The whole case which would be made by hon. Gentlemen who belonged to the bodies to which he had referred was that their funds differed from the Church's funds in that they were the result of private subscriptions and that the Church received her endowments from the State. Wherein lay the difference between the funds of the Wesleyan body and the funds of the English Church? They were both for purposes which had still a vital force and energy behind them, and they were both used by worthy trustees for the objects for which they were intended. Then they were forced to the argument that the Church must have received these funds from some source which enabled the State to lay violent hands upon them. He affirmed that with the exception of tithes, the funds which were in the custody of the Church were funds which had been almost entirely the result of private benefactions. As to tithes, Professor Freeman, a strong Liberal, had shown that the clergy preached the payment of tithes to the laity for the support of spiritual work, and it was long after they had been established and subscribed as the result of those exhortations that the State sanctioned the payment of them. He did not think that could be denied. If they once admitted that it would be nothing but pillage to take away the large sums which belonged to the Wesleyan body, what reason was there for fixing any other term to the deprivation of the Church by the State of funds which were being used more energetically every day for the purposes of the Church by a body whose vitality and enthusiasm, in the opinion of all, was daily growing? The result of disendowment would be the taking away from the Church of a revenue of something like £5,000,000 a year, which was devoted almost entirely to parochial purposes. The result would fall with crushing force upon the poor. It would cause the alienation from the parish churches of functions which they at present performed. People spoke now about passive resistance, but if it were really a question of turning our parish churches into free libraries—for that was amongst the suggestions of the Liberation Society and of certain Bills which had been presented to Parliament—it would meet with the most passionate opposition that had ever been extended to any political proposal. It would be nothing but a calamity to repudiate the connection of the State with the Christian faith. It would be morally indefensible to convert to secular uses the funds of the Church, and thereby deprive the poorest parts of our towns and villages of their regular ministrations. Disestablishment would produce a most bitter religious struggle, and disendowment would diminish the resources so largely employed for charitable purposes. The Church of England was still in close association with the vigorous life of the people.

Mr. WILLIAM JONES (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said that might be the case in England, but not in Wales.

Mr. LYTTELTON said he would not enter into controversy with respect to Wales, but he would have thought the observation would apply to some of the great towns of South Wales.

Mr. WILLIAM JONES agreed that the Church had made great progress in those towns, but that was because of voluntary effort, without any tithes.

Mr. LYTTELTON thought it behoved every one who had a deep affection towards the Church of England to endeavour to persuade all those who were its members to sink individual and comparatively trifling differences, and to work together on the basis of frank and loyal acceptance of those principles which had guided their forefathers in the past, and which had lost none of their ancient virtue.

Sir ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorganshire, E.) said the Welsh Members were in the unique position of having, practically speaking, the whole of the country united, because every one of the constituencies of Wales and Monmouthshire had returned a member pledged to disestablishment. They were glad to hear once more on this question the voice of England, which had been long silent. It was a good omen, for when once John Bull woke up he generally meant business. The Welsh Members had the promise of the Premier that he would bring in a Bill to disestablish the Church in Wales at the earliest opportunity, and they were anxiously waiting for it.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 206 ; Noes, 93. (Division List No. 29.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork,N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert

Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHn.SirJ.T(Cheshire
Cameron, Robert
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clarke, C. Goddard
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, CH.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cullinan, J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Delany, William
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Samuel T.
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Farrell, James Patrick
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Col.Alan (Hereford,S.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Colonel Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hogan, Michael
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, John Deans (Fife,West)
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Maclean, Donald
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Micklem, Nathaniel
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen
Morse, L. L.
Murphy, John
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
O'Brien,Kendal (TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Perks, Robert William
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Rickett, J. Compton
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon.T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth,Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
picer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen,E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Waldron, Laurence Ambrose
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Watt, H. Anderson
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Henry J. (York. W.R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Everett and Mr. Goddard.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hon.SirH.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-

Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beauchamp, E.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hon. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Crossley, William J.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Harvey
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Haddock, George R.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Harwood, George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hervey, F. W. F. (Bury S. Edm'ds
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hn. Col. W.
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hn. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlingt'n
Percy, Earl
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Rose, Charles Day
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seely, Major J. B.
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 198; No 90. (Division List No. 30.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork), N.E.
Abraham, William (Rhondda).
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T. (Cheshire
Cameron, Robert
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clarke, C. Goddard
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Delany, William
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furn'ss
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Samuel T.
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Farrell, James Patrick
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Ginnell, L.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N, E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Colonel Ivor (Mon., S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hogan, Michael
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.

Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Maclean, Donald
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launcest'n)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Micklem, Nathaniel
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Murphy, John
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipper'y Mid.
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Perks, Robert William
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E.)
Raphael Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpton
Rickett, J. Compton
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Scott, H. A. (Ashton-und.-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Waldron, Laurence Ambrose
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Watt, H. Anderson
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carm'rth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Young, Samuel

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Everett and Mr. Goddard.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beauchamp, E.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crossley, William J.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Harvey
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Haddock, George R.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Harwood, George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hervey, F. W. F. (Bury S. Edm'ds
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hn. Col. W.
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl.
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Rose, Charles Day
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Rt. Hn. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart,
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Resolved, That, in the interests alike of Religion and the Nation, it is desirable to Disestablish and Disendow the Church of England both in England and Wales.

Adjourned at a quarter after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 28th February, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR aquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with. National Trust for Places of Historical Interest or Natural Beauty [H.L.].

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with. Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

York and District Tramways Bill [H. L]. Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Barry Railway Bill. Rawtenstall Corporation Bill. Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Thursday next.

Midland Railway Bill [H.L.]. Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [H.L.]. Read 2a, and committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Bill [H.L.]. Manchester Ship Canal (Bridgewater Canal) Bill [H.L.]. Medway Lower Navigation Bill [H.L.]. Devonport Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]. Middlesbrough Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Oxford and District Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.) L. Kilmarnock (*E. Erroll*) L. Abinger, L. Hylton (Chairman), L. Ramsay (*E. Dalhousie*), L. Sandhurst; agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]; Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Burnham (Somerset) Pier Bill [H.L.]; Heywood and Middleton Water Board Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Tyne Improvement Bill [H.L]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.) E. Cathcart, V. Hill, V. Iveagh, L. Belhaven and Stenton, L. Sanderson (chairman); agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday next, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).

Return for January, 1907. Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

Statements of accounts, and of life assurance and annuity business, and abstracts of actuarial reports deposited with the Board of Trade under Section 10 of "The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1870," during the year ended 31st December, 1906.

Order under section 59 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board of the following county council:

Isle of Wight.—For amending certain confirming orders relating to the parishes of North Arreton and South Arreton.

MOTOR-CAR ACTS, 1896 AND 1903.

Regulations made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 12 of the Act of 1903 for altering the Heavy Motor-Car Order, 1904, as to the use of heavy motor-cars on bridges.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situate within the borough of East Retford, made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 8 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain Highways situated within the borough of Guildford, made by the Local Government Board under Section 9 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situate within the borough of Harrogate, made by the Local Government Board under Section 9 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on a certain highway situate within the parish of Heversham, in the county of Westmorland, made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 8 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor-cars on certain highways situate within the urban district of Newmarket, made by the Local Government Board under Section 9 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the registration of motor-cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896 and Section 7 of the Act of 1903:—London (County)—For assigning an index mark to the London County Council in addition to the index marks assigned by the Motor-Car (Registration and Licensing) Order, 1903, and the Order of the Local Government Board dated the 17th day of April 1905.

SHOP HOURS ACT 1904 (CITY OF CARDIFF).

Order made by the council of the city of Cardiff, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the riverside and canton wards of the city.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST RHODESIA AND THE BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE)

Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 2.) Warrant, 1907, dated 14th February 1907.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (PROVISIONAL ORDERS), SESSION, 1907.

Report by the Board of Trade of their proceedings under the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, and the General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, Amendment Act.

BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND).

Returns of the Official Assignees of the King's Bench Division "in Bankruptcy" in Ireland, and of the Local Courts, Belfast and Cork, for the year 1906.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888.

I. Sixteen orders under Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board, of the following county and county borough councils—

Brecon.—For converting part of the parish of Llanwrtyd in the Builth Rural District into the urban district of Llanwrtyd, and for constituting the remainder of the parish a new parish named the parish of Llanwrtyd Without.

Buckingham.—For dividing the parish of Wavendon, in the Newport Pagnell Union, into two parishes named the parish of Wavendon and the parish of Woburn Sands.

Essex.—For defining the boundary between the parish of Bartlow Hamlet (otherwise known as the hamlet of Little Bartlow or of Bartlow End) and the parish of Ashdon.

Flint.—For transferring part of the parish of Hawarden to the parish of Saltney, and of part of the parish of Saltney to the parish of Hawarden.

Gateshead (County Borough).—For uniting the parishes of Gateshead and Heworth Within to form the parish of Gateshead.

Isle of Wight.—For uniting the parishes of North Arreton and Whippingham to form the parish of Whippingham.

Kent.—For transferring the part of the parish of Chatham situate in the borough of Gillingham to the parish of Gillingham.

Lancaster.—For transferring two detached parts of the township of Worsley to the township of Swinton and the urban district of Swinton and Pendlebury.

Lincoln (County Borough).—For uniting the nineteen parishes comprised in the county borough to form the parish of Lincoln.

Northumberland. — For uniting the urban districts of Cowpen and Blyth to form the urban district of Blyth.

Pembroke.—For converting part of the parish of Fishguard into the urban district of Fishguard, and for dividing the parish into two parishes named the parish of Fishguard North and the parish of Fishguard South.

Salop.—For defining the boundary between the parishes of Saint Martin's and Weston Rhyn.

Stafford.—For transferring the parish of Bagnall from the Stoke Rural District to the Leek Rural District.

Suffolk East.—For constituting parts of the parishes of Barking and Creeting Saint Mary a new parish called the parish of Needham Market, and for transferring a further part of the parish of Creeting Saint Mary to the parish of Barking.

Suffolk East.—For uniting the parishes of Kirtley and Lowestoft to form the parish of Lowestoft.

Wilts.—For uniting the parishes of Chitterne All Saints and Chitterne Saint Mary to form the parish of Chitterne.

NEW BILL.

COUNTY COURTS BILL.

A Bill to amend the law relating to County Courts—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 9.)

AUSTRALIAN STATES CONSTITUTION BILL.

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Tuesday next.

THE HOUSE AND GOVERNMENT BILLS.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I beg to move for a Return showing the dates when Government Bills were brought to this House from the House of Commons during the present and the last three preceding Parliaments, and the dates when the different stages of such Bills were taken in this House; and also for a similar Return with regard to Bills introduced in either House by private Members, and subsequently taken up by Government, showing at what stage and on what dates such Bills were so taken up.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House a Return showing the dates when Government Bills were brought to this House from the House of Commons during the present and last three preceding Parliaments, and the dates when the different stages of such Bills were taken in this House; also similar Return with regard to Bills introduced in either House by private Members, and subsequently taken up by Government, showing at what stage and on what dates such Bills were so taken up."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, in reply to the noble Earl I have to say that we desire to offer no opposition to the production of this Return. At the same time I rather wish that in moving for it the noble Earl had given us some reasons for his desire to obtain it. I have not been able to inquire into the exact method in which the Return can be obtained, and it occurs to me that there might be some practical difficulty in identifying the Bills which were taken up in the manner to which the noble Earl alludes in past years. But I will make inquiry as to that and see if a Return can be compiled.

As to the exact advantage to be obtained from a Return of this kind I confess I am in some degree sceptical. I suppose that the noble Earl's object in moving for it is once more to ventilate the very old and the very substantial grievance of which we have all from time to time complained—the late date at which legislation comes before your Lordships' House. That is, as I say, a very substantial grievance, as I think we have all in turn admitted. But what is to be the remedy is another matter altogether. One point which is, of course, of substance, is whether it is possible to introduce into your Lordships' House in the first instance a greater share of proposed Government legislation. I must say that it has always been to me a matter of some surprise that when the Party opposite have been in power they have not thought it wise or possible to introduce more Bills in the first instance in your Lordships' House. From the point of view of noble Lords opposite I should have thought that that was a tolerably easy course to pursue. A considerable number of their Government Bills might, as it seems, have been brought into your Lordships' House without any serious detriment to the course of public business; but when we are in office the matter, as your Lordships will agree, rests upon a somewhat different footing.

It is not easy for us to introduce much of our legislation to your Lordships' House. I wish, indeed, that we could bring in more; but, to be perfectly frank, we know quite well that by far the greater part of the proposals we have to make are not altogether palatable to your Lordships' House, and it is only when they are backed up by the force of public opinion brought to bear by discussions in another place that in many cases your Lordships can be and are induced to accept them. In these circumstances, if we were to bring Bills into your Lordships' House in the first place as a usual custom, they would naturally be moulded into the form most acceptable to the majority of the House. They would then go down to another place and be re-moulded there into a form more acceptable to the majority in the House of Commons; and it seems to me to be a question whether, in view of the discussion which must then necessarily take place between the two Houses, any time would be saved; whether, as a matter of fact, anything would be gained beyond the mere moral satisfaction which some of your Lordships might feel in having some work to do in the earlier part of the session. I do not wish to dwell further on the matter than merely to say that, though I am not very hopeful of any good result, I have no wish to oppose the granting of the Return for which the noble Earl has moved.

LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD: My Lords, I should like to say one word respecting what has fallen from the noble Earl the Lord President of the Council. He has suggested that we could have introduced Bills into this House to a greater extent than we did. Let me remind the noble Earl that in 1905 this House passed sixteen Bills of a very beneficent character—they were not Party measures, but measures to ameliorate defects of a gross nature. Those Bills were sent down at a very early period of the sessions to the House of Commons, but not one of them was advanced a step in the other House. They were never read a second time, and were never referred to beyond the mere record that they had been received. Our labours were entirely thrown away.

It is no doubt advantageous that some Bills should be introduced in this House, but can the noble Earl do anything to ensure that if Bills are promoted here, they will have some respect shown to them and be dealt with in the House of Commons? This is surely a matter in which some arrangement might be come to. But we are not discussing this in full detail to-night. The only Question before your Lordships is the Motion for a Return which my noble friend Lord Camperdown has moved. We admit the necessity for a remedy, but we can never tell what is the remedy until you know exactly what the disease is, and my noble friend's Return would probably show more clearly even than the Return of 1904 how grave this disease is and how certainly it requires a remedy.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I heard with some surprise the statement with which the noble Earl opposite opened his remarks. He professed to be quite unable to conjecture the purpose with which my noble friend had moved for this Return, and he expressed surprise that my noble friend had not given to the House a full account of his reasons for moving. I should have thought that to the meanest understanding it was quite obvious that my noble friend moved for this Return with the object of showing that the opportunities afforded to this House of dealing adequately with measures of importance were altogether insufficient.

That is, as the noble Earl himself admitted a moment ago, not only an old but a substantial grievance; and surely that substantial grievance has assumed an infinitely more important shape at the present moment when we are told that His Majesty's Government have under consideration proposals for fundamentally modifying the relations of the two Houses of Parliament. If that is the case, if what I can only describe as a threat is hanging over the head of this House, surely it is necessary that we should get at the facts, that we should know what are the *data* upon which this charge proceeds, and that we should be given an opportunity of meeting it. In this House time is necessary to us for the purpose of exercising our proper functions as a Chamber of Revision; time is necessary for us in order that we may have, when there is a difference of opinion between the two Houses, an opportunity of considering how far that difference can be adjusted, and our complaint has always been that a sufficient allowance of time is never accorded to this House. The Return moved for by my noble friend will, I think, make that point abundantly clear, and I venture to say that if there is to be any question of dealing with the immensely important subject of the relations of the two Houses of Parliament, this question of the manner in which business is distributed between the two Houses lies on the very threshold of the inquiry. Therefore I, for one, am grateful to my noble friend for having moved for this Return.

The noble Earl opposite told us that His Majesty's Government hesitated to introduce Bills into this House because they anticipated that those Bills would be moulded here in such a shape as to render them unacceptable in the other House of Parliament. I venture to say that that is an altogether unwarrantable assumption. Upon what is that assumption founded? Upon the experience of last session? My Lords, we passed a number of important measures proposed by His Majesty's Government, and I object altogether to the assumption that this House is not to be trusted to discuss and examine in an impartial spirit any measures which the Government of the day may desire to put forward. As I said just now, it is to my mind most important that the facts of the case should be laid fully before this House and the country, and I am therefore very glad that this Return has not been refused.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, this conversation has assumed a somewhat discursive character, and on this occasion I am afraid it is my noble friend who is leading the House who is the cause of that digression. I have moved for a certain Return because I want certain information. When I have obtained the information I shall then consider what use to make of it. My noble friend on the other side appears to me to have imagined that I was going to make some sort of attack on His Majesty's Government, and therefore he delivered himself of a speech defending them for not having taken a particular course, and defending them from charges which, at the present moment, at all events, I have no intention whatever of making. When this Return has been given to us I think it is likely to be very useful. When it has been presented and I have considered it, I shall hope to be able tell my noble friend what deductions I draw from it. He will then have an opportunity of making, no doubt in a much longer form, the speech which he has delivered in anticipation this evening.

On Question, Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

LONDON TRAFFIC.

*LORD LEIGH: My Lords, I rise to ask whether it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on London Traffic by appointing a traffic board; and to move for Papers.

The facts in connection with this matter are briefly these. On 10th February, 1903, that is rather more than four years ago, a Royal Commission was appointed, to examine into, and report upon, London traffic generally. It was, perhaps, the strongest Commission ever appointed by any British Government.

The Commissioners were thirteen in number. The chairman was Sir David Barbour, well known as an expert on finance. Law was represented by the present Lord Chancellor of England, and there were also upon the Commission three other Members of your Lordships' House—the noble Lords Lord Cawdor, Lord Cobham, and Lord Ribblesdale. The House of Commons and the London County Council were represented by Sir John Dickson-Poynder, the City by Sir Joseph Dimsdale, the Home Office by Mr. Murdoch, and the Board of Trade by Sir Francis Hopwood. Railway interests were represented by Sir George Gibb, and, it may be added, also by Lord Cawdor; and art, science, and finance were represented by Sir George Bartley and Sir Felix Schuster. An advisory board of engineers was also appointed, with Sir John Wolfe-Barry, who was also one of the Commissioners, as president, upon which Sir Benjamin Baker and Mr. Parsons, of New York, both well known engineers, served. Several of the Members of the Commission visited the United States and the Continent for the purpose of examining the methods employed in many of the principal cities there. In fact, if ever there was a Commission whose advice was worth attending to surely this was the Commission.

In 1905 the Commission issued its Report. I will not detain your Lordships by dilating upon the many recommendations that were made, including the cutting of two arteries, in the form of two avenues, right through London, from north to south, and from east to west. I will refer to one recommendation only, the appointment of a traffic board, which was unanimously recommended by the Commission. This, they advised, should consist of from three to five competent men, not elected, but appointed by Government for the purpose. Their duties would be to report yearly to Parliament upon London traffic generally, to be constantly on the look out to piece together the various recommendations that might be made as to traffic, to facilitate co-operative action and to prevent overlapping; and this would, it may be noted, prevent great waste of public money. It was also recommended that they should be paid for their services, that their functions should be advisory and semi-judicial, and should extend over the Metropolitan Police area—that is, over Greater London. It was felt by the Commissioners that it was impossible to confer such powers upon the London County Council, or upon any existing local authority or body.

Lord Leigh.

It was the intention of His Majesty's late Government to give effect to the recommendation of the Commission, and to introduce a Bill appointing a traffic board. Why have not His Majesty's present Goverment done the same? I do not know, but it is possible that the following facts may throw some light upon the matter. A member of the London County Council, Captain Swinton, an authority on London traffic, lately moved in the Council Chamber that the Council should impress upon His Majesty's Government the expediency of establishing a traffic board. That proposal was negatived. Is it possible that it is owing to pressure brought to bear by the London County Council upon His Majesty's Government that this delay is taking place in giving effect to the unanimous recommendation tion of the Commission—pressure from members who may desire that the County Council itself should have the sole control of London traffic, and who do not wish to see other forms of locomotion competing with the tramways, as to which they have committed London to such vast expenditure? If so, it is greatly to be regretted that His Majesty's Government should be influenced by such considerations. It would never do to have a traffic board subject to election or to Party influence. A traffic board should be, as recommended by the Commission, composed of paid permanent officials, appointed by the Government for their fitness for the post and for their abilities only. I beg leave to ask the Question which is standing in my name, and to move for Papers, especially as regards any correspondence that may have passed between the Board of Trade, or any other Government Department, and the London County Council, relating to a traffic board.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Papers relating to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on London Traffic for the appointment of a Traffic Board."—(*Lord Leigh.*)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, I should like to be allowed to supplement the remarks made by the noble Lord in reference to a matter which has come under my notice as Chairman of Committees of your Lordships' House. I refer to the effect which the appointment, first, of this Commission, and, secondly, the recommendation for the appointment of a traffic board have had upon the promotion of Bills for the construction of tube railways.

In the year 1901 a Joint Committee was appointed, of which the Earl of Plymouth (then Lord Windsor) was elected Chairman, to consider the principle involved in the Bills then before Parliament, upon which all promoters of tube Bills were informed that their Bills would not be allowed to proceed until the next session of Parliament. In the year 1902 another Committee was appointed, under the presidency of Lord Rayleigh, and they passed one or two not very important tube Bills, the others being left to be dealt with in a future session. Then, in 1903, the majority of the Bills introduced into the House of Commons were withdrawn by request of the Board of Trade, on the ground that no tube railway ought to be constructed until it was known what was the opinion of the Commission which by that time had been appointed to consider the question of London traffic.

In 1904 and 1905 the Commission still sat, and all the tube railway Bills which were introduced into Parliament were ordered to stand over until the Report had been received. There was one exception—that of the North-East London Railway, which was very strongly pressed by the Members of Parliament concerned with that part of London. That railway was allowed to be constructed. The result of what has taken place has been that promoters of tube railways have been told, first, that Bills could not be introduced because the Royal Commission was sitting, and when the Royal Commission had reported they were still told they would not be allowed to proceed with their Bills because the Commission had recommended the appointment of a traffic board and that board had not yet been established.

I am not here to speak on behalf of the promoters of these Bills, but I am here to say that, in my opinion, at any rate, the delay which has been caused by this has been a material delay affecting the interests of the travelling public in London. I am told that some of these tube railways have not been quite so successful as their promoters expected, and possibly, on the other hand, the delay may have saved some of the investing British public the loss of dividends which they would otherwise have expected to receive. But the fact remains that the construction of tube railways has been at a standstill since 1901, owing, first to the sitting of the Royal Commission, and, secondly, to the fact that the traffic board has not yet been established; and I think it is advisable that His Majesty's Government should give some definite pronouncement as to what is their intention in the matter.

LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU: My Lords, I wish to support entirely what has been said by the two noble Lords who have spoken on this subject. I think nobody can have read the excellent Report of the Royal Commission without coming to the conclusion that the problem of London traffic is such a huge one that there is nobody at present constituted that could properly deal with it. That Report, as your Lordships probably know, has been taken as a European pattern, and the Belgian Government has so appreciated its recommendations that it has acted upon them.

When London traffic is referred to it is often forgotten what that traffic really means. It is quite true that the area of greater London is something under 700 square miles, but the tide of traffic through it affects an area far beyond the confines of the metropolis. That the London County Council should be the authority is the more or less openly expressed wish of a portion of the Liberal Party and certainly of the majority on the Council; but I would remind the House that, although the London County Council has jurisdiction over an enormous area, it has no jurisdiction over a large porton of greater London, and that there are five other bodies, the county councils of Kent, Surrey, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, and Essex, who would have no representation if the London County Council were to be the traffic authority.

The total population affected by London traffic is between 8,000,000 and 10,000,000, the population of London itself being taken at 6,500,000; and it may interest the House to know that it is calculated that nearly 1,200,000,000 journeys were taken last year within the area of greater London. Those journeys, numerous as they were, only amount to 170 per head of the population, while every inhabitant of New York made an average of 300 journeys, of Berlin 270 journeys, and of Paris 200 journeys. It is certain, therefore, that finality in the matter of locomotion in London has not yet been reached. The Londoner of to-day is comparatively a slow-moving person, a rather stay-at-home person; but some day, and possibly in a few years time, he may move about as quickly as the New Yorker, in which case the streets of London will present a more deplorable spectacle than they do to-day. The traffic in London may, therefore, be expected to increase even without reckoning on increase of houses or population.

It is also interesting to note that when the Royal Commission began its sittings motor omnibus traffic was in its infancy. I had the honour to be a witness before the Royal Commission, and I remember that this subject of motor omnibuses was treated, I will not say with scorn, but it was not thought possible that motor omnibuses could carry any large proportion of the traffic of London. But last year 184,000,000 passengers were carried by these omnibuses, or 4,000,000 more than were carried by the London County Council's electric tramcars. Any one who goes through the Blue-books must come to the conclusion that the Commission attached a great deal of importance—to my mind, undue importance—to trams as the means of conveying the population of London. A totally new set of circumstances has arisen since the publication of the Report. I remember speaking to a distinguished member of that Commission and urging that further evidence should be taken before the Commission closed. I am glad to say that further evidence was taken; but there were only about ten or twelve motor omnibuses running at that time. Now there are between 800 and 1,000, which shows how rapidly the problem is changing and increasing in gravity. I hope, therefore, that His Majesty's Government will give due consideration to the necessity of forming a traffic board.

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.

There is another point. Great confusion is caused at the present moment by the different jurisdictions to which the traffic is subject. Tramway by-laws have to be submitted to the Board of Trade and approved by them; it is the Local Government Board, on the other hand, who deal with motor-car regulations, which are, as is well-known, enforced by the police. The traffic in the Royal parks is entirely under the jurisdiction of the Office of Works, whilst that in the London County Council parks is under direction of the Home Office; and in the general regulations of the streets the police act on their own authority, under the direction of the Home Office. All these different authorities have their say in the control of the traffic of the metropolis, and in some cases ridiculous situations arise in consequence. For instance, on one occasion the Board of Trade gave authority for tramcars to carry an excess of passengers in inclement weather, but immediately this authorisation was given by the Board of Trade the Home Office stepped in, through the police, and declared that in all cases where excess passengers were carried, a prosecution would immediately follow. I do not suppose that when it came to a settlement Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. Lloyd-George would have quarrelled on the point, but it is a distinct blot on the present arrangements that two Government Departments can issue contradictory orders and that there should be no authority in supreme control.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission necessarily involve a large expenditure in the direction of altering streets. Avenues cannot be built for nothing, and I suggest to noble Lords opposite that, whatever our opinions may be with regard to the London County Council and its fitness to control the traffic of London, that Council is already too over-burdened with financial engagements to be able to raise sufficiently large sums to carry out the recommendations of the Commission. If London is to remain a great city, if its people are to be able to move about as they should, a great expenditure will have to be incurred. A great proportion of it may be remunerative, but I hold that a new authority could raise money more cheaply for the great expenditure necessary to deal with this matter than the London County Council, and could apply it more efficiently.

Such an authority could deal effectively with the nuisance caused by the irregular manner of pulling up the streets. There are streets in London which are more often "up" than "down." Noble Lords who have the misfortune to be in London in the autumn months know that at that time you have to be very well acquainted with the geography of London in order to get about. Even in Whitehall the roadway was up for a period of eighteen months. Surely there ought to be a central authority to look after these matters. At the present moment all sorts of authorities have power to pull up the streets, and, as far as I can make out, the law on the subject is itself very vague. Electric light companies have in many cases power to pull them up; they can be pulled up for sewers, hydraulic power, water mains, gas mains, telephones, telegraphs, street drains, lavatories—the streets can be pulled up for any of these purposes without let or hindrance, and without any consideration of the importance it is to London that traffic should not be unduly interfered with.

The carrying of London traffic has been described by Mr. John Burns as a gold mine, but, as far as I have been able to make out, most of the companies engaged in carrying are doing badly. The London County Council are earning a comparatively small profit; the £10 shares of the London United Tramways, the biggest of the outside companies, stand at £6; the London General Omnibus Company deplore decreasing receipts this year, and their £100 shares stand at £71; the report of the London Road Car Company states that although they have carried more passengers they have earned less profits, and the £6 shares of this company stand at £2 10s.; and the shares of the Motor Omnibus Companies stand at a discount. When we come to the tube railways, they are even in a worse position. The £100 shares of the Metropolitan Railway, which I suppose had to be over-capitalised originally, stand at £42; and the shares of the District Company have the misfortune to stand at only £14. The Central Railway Company shares stand at a discount, and the City and South London Railway shares at only £42. I quote these statistics to show that the carrying companies of London have not got that gold mine which is sometimes inferred. Outside privately-managed companies do not seem to be making much profit either.

The point is, is the absence of co-ordination and in some cases an excess of competition on the whole good for the people of London? I maintain that it is not, and that it is high time that the traffic of London was controlled by a central expert body. I am convinced that if the recommendations of the Royal Commission were carried out a distinct improvement would be noticed in a few years, and the improved state of things would be a lasting credit to the Government responsible for the initiation of a traffic board. As to the question of improvements, which, of course, is the most important subject, we all know that there is a certain feeling as regards the London County Council. It may be deplored, but there it is. The outside county councils and the borough councils of London do not work harmoniously with the London County Council, and I believe that if a central body, such as a traffic board, were appointed, friction would be avoided and the means of locomotion and transit in London co-ordinated.

*THE EARL OF GRANARD: I shall not follow the noble Lord into the various points he has raised, but will confine myself to the Question which stands on the Paper. I can assure the noble Lord that the Government are very fully alive to the magnitude of the whole question of London traffic, but they are at the same time desirous to move very cautiously in the matter. They are not very anxious to come to a definite decision without full consideration of the whole matter, and I feel sure your Lordships will agree with me that this is certainly the proper course to adopt.

The traffic board recommended by the Royal Commission was to have very large powers indeed. It would be quite impossible to appoint such a board without legislation; and your Lordships are aware that the Government have, at the present moment, a great deal of legislation before them. I very much regret it, but I do not think it will be possible during the present session to give effect to the recommendation, or to bring in a Bill dealing with this subject at all. The House will remember that in his very able speech in seconding the Address Lord Chichester prophesied that a Bill of some sort would be brought in dealing with cheap trains for workmen. It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to deal with this question in the course of a few weeks. It is hoped that these cheap trains will be of great help to workmen.

The noble Lord who raised this question has moved for certain Papers. He seems to think that there have been communications between the London County Council and the Board of Trade or other Government Department on the subject of London traffic, but I have made inquiries at the Board of Trade and the Home Office and have been informed that no correspondence of any kind has passed between either of those offices and the County Council. I am afraid that there are, therefore, no Papers to present.

Lord RIBBLESDALE: My Lords, I am glad to hear that the question of cheap trains is to be dealt with, but I would remind the House that London traffic is not entirely a matter of cheap trains. There is a great deal of vehicular traffic, and there are a great number of people who want to get about their business. I have risen to intervene in this debate because I desire to know how long the present chaotic condition of things, by which the every-day life of the Metropolis is more or less strangled by the choking up of the great arteries of traffic, is to continue.

I am very dissatisfied with the answer which has been given on behalf of the Government, but I am not altogether surprised at it. We are well accustomed to the platonic liveliness of every Government in regard to the recommendations of a Royal Commission which advocates very large changes. Governments are always "very fully alive" to the importance of the subject, and so on; but the House is always appealed to as to the wisdom of *festina lente.* The noble Earl said your Lordships would all agree that no Government would care to deal with such a great question as the means of locomotion and transit in London in a hurry. Nobody would care to do that. But, after all, you have had a Royal Commission, whose labours involved the expenditure of an enormous sum of money, who sat three and a half years, and visited many countries, and who, to use a vulgar colloquialism, "took the cake" for the size of their Report. There are eight volumes. I happened to be a member of the Royal Commission myself, but unfortunately I was ill during part of the time, and my withers are therefore not wrung at all by any feeling of neglect of my own labours.

When the Royal Commission finally produced the eighth volume the Report was referred to in a well-written, well-considered, article in *The Times,* in which the following passage occurred—

"It is not to be wondered at that the Traffic Commission's Report has been publicly accepted as the standard text-book in France, Germany, and America on urban traffic."

That appears to be the whole unction which the Commissioners are ever likely to be able to lay to their bosoms. As I say, I do not refer to myself at all in the matter. I belong to the leisured class, but most of those who served on that Commission were extremely hard-working people, who gave up their time to the work in hand. I have only to instance the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, Sir George Gibb, Sir John Wolfe-Barry, Sir Felix Schuster. I wonder very much whether you will ever get gentlemen of that kind to undertake such work and give their time and experience when the Government takes a line such as has been announced. It is invariably the same with all Royal Commissions. If the Commission's Report is a little one, it is said, "Oh, it is so little we will not do anything;" but, if their Report is a bulky one, it is then said, "It is so great that we cannot do anything."

The noble Earl Lord Onslow went a little into the circumstances which led to the appointment of this Royal Commission. I do not like to place myself in any disagreement with the Lord Chairman about Committee work, but what really happened was this. It was in

1901 that all the tube railway Bills were suspended and referred to a Joint Committee presided over by Lord Plymouth. Then Lord Onslow said that in 1902 nothing was done except that one or two Bills were passed by Lord Rayleigh's Committee. What really happened was that in that year thirty-two Bills came before Parliament dealing with 109 miles of railway. Those were referred to two Committees, one of which was presided over by Lord Plymouth and the other by myself. The result was that three and a half miles out of the 109 miles were sanctioned in London and six outside; but when our Bills went down to Sir Lewis McIver's Commons Committee the whole thing was a fiasco, and that led to the appointment of the Royal Commission.

I now come to Lord Leigh's reference to the attitude of the London County Council in this matter. I have had a Question on the Paper very similar to Lord Leigh's for I do not know how many months. It was on the Paper during the whole of the autumn session, when our time was taken up by other matters. It has been on during the few days of this session, and in it I ask whether the attitude of the London County Council had anything to do with the answer which was given in another place when very much the same question was asked by Sir J. Dickson-Poynder. I shall come to that presently. It was owing to the action of the London County Council that the Royal Commission was appointed. I was a member of the London County Council at the time when the question was debated in the Council. The Council referred the whole matter to a special Committee of their Parliamentary, Finance, and Highways Committees, and after grave deliberation this body asked the Board of Trade—that is His Majesty's Government — to appoint a Royal Commission.

The Commission was duly appointed, and, as I have said, the Commissioners deliberated for three and a half years, and published a Report in eight volumes which secured the not always very easily obtained approval of *The Times*. But nothing is done. As Lord Onslow has stated, all tube railway and locomotion activities are hung up. It is said, "There is going to be a new complexion given to all these things. It is 100 to one that we shall have this traffic board, and we must reconsider our operations in every possible way." Sir J. Dickson-Poynder, who is intimately connected with the housing question, and who was Chairman of the Housing Committee under the London County Council before he went to serve his Queen in South Africa, where he behaved with great distinction, has always held that this traffic question is intimately bound up with the housing question. Wishing to know if anything was going to be done in regard to the question of traffic as a means of helping towards the solution of the housing problem, Sir John raised the question recently in another place, and in the answer which was there given by the Government the House of Commons was told very much the same as your Lordships have been told this evening that nothing was going to be done—

"all the more owing to the transitional stage which the problem has reached."

I do not know exactly what that means. What does a transitional stage mean? Dealing with traffic is a progressive science, and if we are going to wait we shall wait for ever. Meanwhile London traffic does not wait. It goes on, and the Prime Minister, even with the magnificent majority which he commands in the other House, can no more stop it than King Canute could stop the sea at Dover. Traffic goes on; something will have to be done, and you have got these eight volumes telling you what can be done.

Now I come to the reason why the whole thing is hung up. We have been told by Lord Granard this evening that there has been no correspondence, but I am perfectly sure that the noble Lord who introduced this question has put his finger on the right spot, and that the real obstruction to anything being done in the direction of the recommendations of the Commission is the attitude of the Progressive London County Council. I believe that His Majesty's Government are afraid of the London County Council on this particular point. I do not know that I can put it in any other way. The President of the Board of Trade I have not the honour of knowing, but from reading some of the observations which he makes from time to time in reference to your Lordships' House he appears to be somewhat emotional. Mr. John Burns

I have the honour of knowing as a colleague on the London County Council. I know his vigorous, masterful ascendency, and having read Mr. Lloyd-George's hysterical views about your Lordships' House I can easily believe that Mr. John Burns's masterful ascendency has been a little too much for the President of the Board of Trade.

I think Lord Leigh is perfectly right. It is matter of common knowledge—I know it myself from conversation with members of that body—that the London County Council will not brook the idea of any other central authority controlling locomotion, and so nothing had been done. I am inclined to think that Mr. John Burns has not only exercised his influence over Mr. Lloyd-George but over the rest of his colleagues in the Government. I am afraid that we shall get nothing more than was contained in the official reply on behalf of the Government to-day, but I was rather surprised to hear Lord Granard say he "understood" that the Report of the Commission contained a great many recommendations. Surely Lord Granard, as representing the Government Department concerned, knows something about the Report. Surely the Local Government Board know exactly what the recommendations involve. The noble Earl spoke as though he expected inspiration from Lord Leigh and from Lord Montagu of Beaulieu. He surely must know what is proposed. I have, however, nothing more to say. I repeat that public convenience is being sacrificed, and that it is not likely that you will get able men to give the time and experience which the members of this Commission gave to this question unless some little regard is paid to their recommendations.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, I hope your Lordships will allow me to say a few words on this subject in the character of a Royal Commissioner. It is quite true, as my noble friend who served with me on that Commission has said, that the Royal Commission consisted of men as to many of whom it could not be claimed that they were men of leisure. I certainly have never in my life aspired to be a man of leisure, and the same can be said of others like Sir J. Wolfe-Barry, Sir Felix Schuster, Sir Francis Hopwood, and others who served on that laborious Commission. It was the most fascinating inquiry that can be imagined. No one has any idea until he enters upon the subject what a vast amount of ground it covers, and how intensely fascinating it is in every aspect; and I must say that it engrossed my attention to the neglect of my other duties for a considerable time.

This particular Motion is directed to one of the specific recommendations of the Royal Commission, and to one of them only — the recommendation that there ought to be a traffic board, not merely for London, but for the large area surrounding London which must not be forgotten. But throughout this debate there seems to be a misapprehension in regard to the duties which we propose to attribute to the traffic board. We did not propose that it should have any power over any one. I do not mean to say that there was not to be power to sit as arbitrators in cases of dispute between different municipalities. There may have been some little power—I cannot tax my memory—in regard to the pulling up of streets. There may or there may not have been such power; but, broadly speaking, the traffic board was not designed for any such purpose. It was not to supersede the authority of the London County Council or of any other municipal body within the metropolitan area. We well knew, of course, that there could be no improvement in the condition of London traffic without expenditure out of the rates, and we were not so rash as to suggest that any authority but an elected body could impose any burden whatever upon the rates.

The main object of this board, in the view of the Commissioners, was that it should be advisory; that it should report from time to time upon the infinitely difficult and complex problem of London traffic; that it should give its assistance and advice to Committees of both Houses of Parliament, sitting together, as we hope they would, for the consideration of private Bills affecting this problem; that it should examine these private Bills, not with any power to reject them or to pass them into law, but simply to advise the promoters how best to get their schemes fairly considered and in harmony with other schemes, and to suggest to the Parliamentary Committees the course they should adopt in regard to those Bills.

The traffic of London—I speak not only of the overground but also of the underground traffic—has got into its present tangle because the streets, until quite recently, have been laid out haphazardly, and because the tramways and railways, and even the tubes until lately, have been laid out in the same fashion; and until there is an authoritative, well-informed, and instructed body to keep before the Committees of Parliament the real bearing of the different proposals laid before them affecting London traffic London will never get the means and facilities for traffic which it ought to possess.

Many of your Lordships are familiar with the great city of Paris. It is a curious thing that 114 years ago the French in Paris appreciated the necessity of what I may call co-ordination between different projects for the improvement of the streets; and in the year 1793, in the very storm of the Revolution and at a time when men's heads were falling from their shoulders without either notice or interest, a committee laid down the finest and most elaborate schemes for the reconstruction of the streets. Those plans were worked upon till 1859, when Baron Haussmann made some amendments, and they were followed until completed only as recently as 1890 or thereabouts, nearly 100 years after their commencement. The result is seen in the broad and well-laid-out streets of that magnificent metropolis, arranged on a harmonious plan, and giving proper facilities for traffic.

In London, on the other hand, things have been done without adequate supervision. When new streets are being erected there are not sufficient powers to see that what are likely to be main thoroughfares shall be of the adequate width, which ought to be at least 100 feet. Instead of that, the thing, so to speak, is left to mere chance. That is so even now, though I do not say it is so bad as it was. The Royal Commission, therefore, suggested the appointment of an advisory board. Properly to regulate the traffic of London it is necessary to extend the control for fifteen miles from Charing Cross in all directions. In that area there are, in addition to the London County Council, the county councils of Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Surrey, and Hertfordshire, and numbers of subordinate parish authorities; and it was for that reason that the Commissioners recommended an advisory board rather than a board with executive powers.

Blame has been put upon the Government that they have not set up this traffic board. I am rather an enthusiast on the subject, having bestowed so much time and trouble upon it; but if it is to be done by legislation I am sure your Lordships will have some sympathy even with your adversaries on account of the handful of legislation we already have to deal with. Speaking for myself, I do not think it is essential that the traffic board should consist of two or three, or four or five, persons absolutely nominated for the purpose with no other work. I think such a board might consist of nominated representatives of the Home Office, the Board of Trade, and the Local Government Board, who should be directed to co-operate and devote a large part of their time to the work, and to whom the Committees of Parliament could, if they liked, look for advice and guidance.

The Royal Commission had evidence that the solution of the housing difficulty in London depends upon the solution of the traffic difficulty. Mr. Charles Booth told us that it was the only way in which the housing question could be settled. I will not go so far as to say that; but I am quite certain that it cannot be effectively settled without a very large extension of locomotive facilities in London. We had most interesting evidence on that point, and came to a unanimous decision in regard to that part of our Report. Taking London as a circle, over-crowding on the basis of two in a room is less at the circumference, but at the centre so enormous is it that it is a disgrace to our civilisation. Indeed, unless we put our hands to this work for the purpose of finding a remedy we have no longer a right to call ourselves a really civilised people, such are the infamous conditions resulting from overcrowding.

The method of relief seems to be indicated by a further fact—namely, that it is impossible in the central parts of London to get land for workmen's dwellings upon economic terms. Take the case of the Holborn to Strand improvement, which has been recently carried out, and opened by His Majesty. I cannot carry the whole of the figures in my mind, but I am pretty certain that I am within a very small percentage when I tell your Lordships what the figures were. The cost of getting the land for the purpose of re-housing on the spot those who were displaced by the improvement was about £200,000. The London County Council were obliged to write that down at £44,000 and to charge the whole of the remaining £156,000 upon the rates. They wrote it down in order that they might be able, on that reduced expenditure on paper, to charge rents which it was possible for artisans to pay, and even then the rents worked out as high as 10s. for a couple of rooms. That has been the history of every attempted improvement in the central part of London by the London County Council and their predecessors.

Experience shows that you cannot re-house in the central parts of London except at a great cost to the rates; in other words, the rents are being partly paid out of the rates. There is no escape from it. It is no good thinking you can re-house in the central parts of London. Believe me, you cannot do it. On the other hand, the housing schemes—they are not very many—which the London County Council have undertaken outside London can be carried out upon economic terms; they can buy the land at from £300 to £500 per acre, build, and let at rents which will repay them economically. But adequate means of locomotion are wanted to get the people there. It has been proved that wherever locomotion facilities are given the people will immediately follow.

I have only indicated in the roughest way and in the shortest space the relation between this terrible housing problem on the one hand, and the question of locomotion facilities on the other; and I am sure that when my noble friend Lord Ribblesdale spoke as he did just now with a great deal of feeling, and perhaps some warmth, he had in his mind what was proved before us—the vital importance of this question of locomotion in London in order to settle the housing difficulty. The question of locomotion is vital for the very health of the City, to save the City from being throttled—I do not mean in the business sense. The people should not be throttled by being kept in vile, uninhabitable dens in the centre of London. But all this is really a municipal work. I have always been a supporter of the London County Council, and I regret that my noble friend on my left seemed to think that the tramways were not a wise enterprise on the part of the London County Council.

LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU: I did not mean that. I welcome the tramways as a part solution.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I am glad to hear the noble Lord say that. The tramways of London have been a blessing to hundreds of thousands of the population, while nothing could have been better than the linking up of different parts and sections by which their usefulness has been doubled. I say that this is largely municipal work, and that the London County Council have done splendid service in connection with this subject. I am not speaking now in reference to the forthcoming election—I have not had time to follow the various controversies. But I say we ought to do everything we can to support the municipality, whether Moderate or Progressive, or any other, in pushing forward the means of locomotion in London so as to enable the people to get in and out with facility. This is not a thing in which the Government can do much, and I hope the new County Council will fairly consider the subject as citizens of London, and co-operate with His Majesty's Government in finding a solution of the difficulty. I am not sure that all I have said in the latter part of my observations have had a very strict bearing on the particular Question asked by the noble Lord, but I think it has a relation to it, and I feel as strongly as any man the enormous importance of this question of London traffic.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, we have all listened with deep interest to the observations which have fallen from the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, who addressed us this evening, not only with all the authority attaching to his position in this House, but with the special experience and knowledge which belong to him as a member of the Royal Commission.

I do not think that the greater part of his remarks were of a nature to which my noble friend who introduced this subject, or my noble friend Lord Montagu, have any reason to take exception.

The noble and learned Lord admitted freely the necessity of establishing a well-informed and instructed body for the purpose of advising Parliament, and advising the great public departments who are concerned in these questions, and he dwelt upon the extremely complex nature of the problem and upon the circumstances which render London an infinitely more difficult city to deal with than many other great cities with which we are familiar; of course, the more complex the problem the more urgently necessary it is that there should be some expert body capable of giving us the kind of advice which a traffic board would be able to give. The noble Lord who spoke first on behalf of the Government admitted the magnitude of the question, but thought it was one which it was necessary to deal with with very great caution. We certainly shall not dispute that, although some of us may perhaps think that if His Majesty's Government could have shown a little more courage in dealing with this question and a little more caution in dealing with certain other questions, the result might have been more satisfactory. That is the reply which I should venture to make to the noble and learned Lord when he appeals to us for indulgence on the ground that His Majesty's Government have already what he spoke of very appropriately as a handful of legislation. I think it is a handful of legislation, and I think His Majesty's Government are likely to find their hands extremely full before the session is over.

The noble Lord who spoke on behalf of the Government said that this question required legislation, and that for this reason some delay was inevitable. But what I should like to point out is that the Royal Commission recommended the appointment of an expert board of this kind rather by way of a preliminary step for the purpose of clearing the ground and informing public opinion before these great problems are dealt with by Parliament. On page 99 the Commission give examples of the kind of questions on which the board might be specially required to report: they say—

> "The following are examples of other important questions on which the Board might be specially required to report, and on some of which we think it should report:—(1) The improvement of the main roads leading out of London; (2) The Building Laws as affecting districts not yet built over within the area of 'Greater London.' The revision and amendment of the laws regulating the breaking up of the streets; and (4) The consolidation and amendment of the laws affecting traffic."

Those are all extremely difficult and intricate questions, and the point which I desire to make is that, if they are to be dealt with at some future time, the kind of report which the Commission hope to get from this traffic board is a most important and, I might almost say essential, preliminary step in order that Government may be supplied with the facts upon which to base the policy which they will here after adopt.

We are naturally tempted to ask, How long is this period of caution to last? How long is this caution to be maintained? In the meanwhile the state of things which my noble friend behind me so well described, is becoming more and more serious. With every year that passes the congestion of traffic becomes greater. I think I am right in saying that the Commissioners report that in many of the most busy parts of London vehicular traffic during the greater part of the day cannot move at a greater pace than four-and-a-half miles an hour. If time means money, what a loss of money alone that great delay must involve! Then there is the question of the pulling up of the roadways, about which some of my noble friends spoke feelingly. I speak rather feelingly about it too, for I live in a particular corner of London immediately adjoining the house of the noble Duke the Duke of Devonshire, and I do not think I exaggerate when I say that there is not one month in the twelve in which the roadway at this point is not being excavated by marauders of one description or another. By whose authority they go there I do not know, but as fast as one gang disappears it is replaced by another, who, as the thoroughfare is a very narrow one, succeed in obstructing it completely, making a voyage upon wheels in that direction a matter of considerable peril.

The noble and learned Lord spoke with eloquence and feeling upon the question of the housing of the working classes which is bound up with the present condition of things. He referred to it as a disgrace to civilisation. Well, my Lords, those are strong words. If it is a disgrace to civilisation, surely no time ought to be lost in taking at any rate the first step towards bringing about a better state of things. I only rose for the purpose of expressing my very earnest hope that His Majesty's Government will address themselves seriously to the task. I believe I am right in saying that when they took office they found, in one of the public departments, the outline of a Bill which the late Government was engaged in preparing. I trust that they will pursue their investigations with no needless loss of time, and I add my hope that my two noble friends behind me will watch the case with attention and return to the charge at some future time.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: My Lords, in venturing to address your Lordships in a debate of this sort one ought to produce some credentials, and the credentials I wish to produce are that I was a member of that important Commission on the Housing of the Poor on which His Majesty the King and the late Lord Salisbury served, and before whom many of the problems which are now being discussed by your Lordships came. The problems were urgent in 1884; they get more urgent every day, and I think that what most of your Lordships have said is true, that though the problems may be difficult they ought not to be postponed. It is not in any sense a Party question, though it is a very controversial question.

The same problem in a less acute form confronts us in all our great towns. As they grow there is the same centrifugal force and the same necessity for opening up communication. While I quite agree with the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack that the Local Government Board and the other Departments might appoint experts to perform the functions of an advisory committee and assist the Committees of Parliament, yet I am quite satisfied that it is impossible to deal with the question of locomotion and the development of traffic between the centre and circumference of great cities without legislation of a very important character. Most of the Continental nations have that legislation. Power is granted to the local authorities to lay down a general and comprehensive plan regulating the formation of new streets and the outskirts of a town. In this matter private rights are involved, and legislation consequently becomes a necessity. We certainly want legislation which shall enable the growth of streets to be on some general plan, with some impartial official as arbitrator to award among the various building owners the fair charge of the streets; you must have a tribunal to award compensation equally and impartially among them all, and I have not the slightest doubt that we must give power to deal with building estates if we really wish to see our towns grow properly and symmetrically. What the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack said of Paris was most interesting; and I would remind your Lordships that after the Great Fire London lost her finest opportunity by the rejection of the proposals which Sir Christopher Wren brought before the Government of the day.

While welcoming an advisory tribunal I have not the slightest doubt in maintaining that it would not be sufficient by itself to meet the necessities of the case. I quite agree that the body to deal with this question cannot be a representative body, elected from the various local authorities; for in that case you would have conflicting interests, and each representative would think he was there to hold a brief for his own locality. It is obvious that a body of this kind must be an independent body. I had a little experience of the difficulties that arise in these matters when two years ago I was sent down by your Lordships to serve on a Commission in Glasgow to consider, *inter alia*, the extension of the tramways there. The City of Glasgow has done wonders in the matter of its trams; yet infinite trouble is caused through the jealousy of various neighbouring local bodies, and many concessions have to be made and opposition bought off because there is no independent body to deal with the question of locomotion impartially and fairly for the whole district.

Though the question is not a Party question, it is one which raises many controversies; the interests of various persons are concerned, and therefore it is not a matter which, so far as legislation is involved, can be hurried through. These great interests, whether they be those of owners or of municipalities, will demand to be heard and will be heard at length. Therefore, to deal with the question as a whole is not a light or an easy matter. But it is, I think, a pressing matter. I think nobody can have studied the question of the housing of the poor in our great towns without seeing that the essential solution is, as far as possible, by easy means of locomotion to place people in less congested areas and to enable them to get rapidly to and from their work. It is a curious thing, but you find in all the great towns on the Continent as well as in England that the greatest congestion of population is not absolutely at the very heart of the town; there the property becomes so valuable for business purposes that it ceases to be residential; it is half a mile round the heart that you get the circle of congestion. Serious difficulties have arisen from the attempts to rehouse where the price of the sites is prohibitive, and I am convinced that future sites for housing schemes will have to be selected in districts where land can be obtained at a reasonable figure. I hope your Lordships will endeavour to promote a public opinion which shall lead to very prompt action, first of all within the limits which may be possible without legislation, and at an early date by some well-considered scheme which the force of both Parties will carry through against all opposition.

*THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I should like to say a few words in support of what has been said by the noble Lord who has just sat down. After the forcible description which the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack gave of the present state of affairs as a disgrace to civilisation in some of its particulars, I feel sure that the Government cannot rest content with the somewhat nebulous promises which have been held out on their behalf. It was my lot, as Bishop of Rochester, to live for several years in a small house in a crowded district of South London, and to be daily and nightly conversant with the problems that arise both as to traffic and housing; and I desire to emphasise in the strongest way what the noble and learned Lord said as to the impossibility of separating the two questions of housing and traffic.

It is true that in London the area of the greatest crowding is moving away from the central region, though it still exists there on a large scale, and until we have enabled the problem of the housing of workers to be dealt with more satisfactorily by giving greater facilities in the way of traffic arrangements, we shall really not even have entered upon the solution of that most complicated and difficult question. Those who live on the roads of traffic leading from the poorest parts of the metropolis, as I do, and are able day by day to see the difficulties of those who have to journey to the centre and how they are being grappled with, can realise the intimate connection of these two questions. It is a melancholy fact that London is behind almost every large city on the Continent as regards the laying out of new streets. The deliberate system whereby an elaborated plan has to be approved for the laying out of a new area in a town, though familiar elsewhere in Europe, is unknown to us. Nothing could be more deplorable either æsthetically or from the point of view of health than the miserable, monotonous rows of long, ugly, mean streets which are growing up all round London in a way which would be absolutely impossible in the case of many large cities on the Continent. Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark are all far ahead of us in this respect. The fact that we are at this time of day allowing the housing of the growing population to take the form it is taking, is a marvel to those who are familiar with the way in which other cities, to which London is admirably fitted to be a rival and an example, are laid out.

I earnestly hope that the discussion this afternoon will go far to remedy the apathy that exists on this matter and that it will lead His Majesty's Government to look into the subject with a view to legislation, if the crowd of legislation which is at present before them should some day be so relieved as to allow of the introduction of a measure which will remedy what the Lord Chancellor called a crying disgrace to the metropolis. But a great deal, as he has told us, can be done without legislation, and if that is so, let His Majesty's Government find time for seeing what can be done in that way. They have before them a problem of extraordinary magnitude. The fact that London now contains 500,000 more people in it than were contained in the whole of England and Wales in the days of Queen Anne, ought to make every one realise the difficulties that have to be faced, and I trust that the afternoon's debate will go far to stimulate any laggards upon whom responsibility for the task may lie.

*The Earl of CREWE: My Lords, I do not want to prolong this debate, but perhaps it is right that I should say one or two words. I think the noble Lord opposite is to be congratulated on having initiated a very interesting debate on an extremely important subject, and I do not think the House need at all complain if the debate has somewhat wandered from the question of London traffic into the very closely allied question of the housing of the poor.

I can assure the House that the Government by no means underrate the importance of this question, or the remarkable services that were rendered by that Commission of which so much has been said. I am afraid my noble friend behind me considered that their very arduous labours had not been sufficiently considered, but I think that the speech of my noble and learned friend who was himself a distinguished member of that Commission shows that any complaint on that score is not well founded. We are thoroughly grateful for the work which those gentlemen did, and we are prepared to give the very closest consideration to the matter. It is perfectly true that in this matter London has to be dealt with as a whole—London in the largest sense, including its outskirts; and it is very possible that the appointment of a traffic board, or something like it, may prove to be one way of solving the question; but, of course, there are other ways.

The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

A great deal has been said about Germany. In Germany, as I daresay many of your Lordships are aware, expert knowledge is obtained in a different way. There the mayor and the deputy mayor—the burgomaster and his subordinate—are permanent paid officers and study these things. Men of the very highest distinction are perfectly willing to give the whole of their lives, because they are appointed very often for seven or ten years and then reappointed, to the study of these questions. I am fully in accord with what the most rev. Primate has said as to the admirable way in which the Germans lay out their towns; but I must remind the House that if we had that kind of thing here, it would involve an interference with the rights of private owners which would go far beyond anything that so far any British Government has ventured to suggest. In Germany no man can lay out any part of the outskirts of a town without not only submitting his plans for approval to the local authority, but absolutely having to take their plans and lay out the land in the way which they prescribe. Personally I should have not the faintest objection to seeing a similar rule obtain in England, but it certainly would involve an interference by a central authority with rights of private owners to which, unfortunately as I think, we are not in this country entirely used.

One point occurs to me on the question of the supposed delay which we are showing in dealing with this matter. It is that, however many experts you may get to advise you on matters of this kind, public opinion is not stable. For instance, tube railways were once talked of as the *ultima ratio* in the solution of the traffic problem. Everything was going to be settled by means of tube railways. But, if I remember the Report of the Commission correctly, tube railways received rather faint praise in that document. That, I think, shows that there is something to be said for proceeding with considerable caution in this matter. Even though you may collect a body of experts they may advocate a particular kind of locomotion which may not recommend itself to those interested in the problem a few years hence. As a matter of fact, there is a a tube railway authorised from one side of Hyde Park to the other, but at present it does not seem to be worth the promoters' while to make it.

There is one tube railway which I have always regarded with great interest; it has just been opened, or is about to be opened—the tube from Charing Cross to Hampstead. I am personally interested in it because I happened to be the first chairman of an enterprise known as the Hampstead Garden Suburb, which I am glad to say is now capably presided over by Mr. Alfred Lyttelton. That is one of those attempts towards the solution of this problem by buying land in large blocks, and consequently buying it cheaply, and laying it out as attractively as possible with houses of different kinds to suit different purses and different tastes. The possibility of utilising that large estate of between 200 and 300 acres entirely depended on the fact that a tube railway would have a station at one end of the estate. That, I think, is an instance of how closely the question of locomotion is bound up with the question of housing.

The noble Marquess opposite made rather merry with our frank admission that we have a good deal of legislation on hand. I do not grudge him any satisfaction which his humour may derive from that fact. We frankly admit the fact. We do think that, after ten years of Opposition, holding the views we do, we have considerable arrears to make up. We do not attempt to deny the fact, and therefore we cannot undertake in one session or in two sessions to do a great many things which we should like to do and which ultimately we hope to do. But I am bound to say that I am inclined to traverse one statement which has been made on this particular question. I do not think that the traffic problem —I say nothing about the problem of housing—is urgent in the sense that matters are getting worse. If anything, I am inclined to believe that with the opening of the tube railways and the extension of and linking up the London tramway system matters are, on the whole, although I do not say they are satisfactory, rather better in the last year or two than for five or six years past. In these circumstances, although not denying the general urgency of the question, we may plead the greater urgency of other matters with which we have to deal.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IN INDIA.

*LORD KINNAIRD: My Lords, I beg to ask His Majesty's Government whether, in view of the trustees of a charitable property at Simla, India, belonging to the Young Women's Christian Association, having suddenly received notice that the Government intend to acquire this property against the wishes of the trustees under the powers of the Land Acquisition Act, and considering the increased number of properties held in India for charitable purposes, there is sufficient protection for such property that it shall not be unnecessarily acquired by the Government; and further, to ask His Majesty's Government to lay on the Table a statement of the different methods by which private or trust property may be compulsorily acquired in cantonments and elsewhere in India.

In 1904 the Young Women's Christian Association in India acquired a house at Simla. That property had been for three years in the market, and could have been secured by the Government if they had wanted it for any purpose. The Association acquired it subject to a lease, and were much surprised in November last to see a notice in the newspaper that under the Land Acquisition Act the Government proposed to acquire the property. Of course, it is not for one moment contended that any body should stand in the way of the public need, but the Association fail to see how the property within so short a time can have become so urgently requisite for Government purposes. A sum of over £3,000 had been collected with very great difficulty, partly in India and partly in England, for this purpose but mainly by one charitable lady in this country, who naturally feels very strongly in this matter, and the contention is that there is no public need necessitating the taking away of this trust property. I am told that the Act which was passed for land acquisition was not intended to be of very wide application, and was certainly not meant to give power for charitable property to be taken simply at the wish of certain under-officials. But at any rate we think that if this property is taken, the Government might under the same powers by which they take our property, acquire somebody else's for us and make an exchange, as is sometimes done in other cases, so that the girls for whom the building was leased may not be dispossessed. It is not the rupees that the Association want; they want the house, and they cannot get another at Simla. The house is near that part of Simla where the girls are employed, and it is also used as a convalescent home for English girls and women in India. Therefore it seems to us that unless there is a real public need shown the property should not be taken. Since I gave notice of this Question I have received a letter from one of our hospitals for women in India, the writer of which states—

> "We are much agitated at present because the Government are taking, in the most off-hand way, all the land they want for their hospital accommodation. The other day Colonel — made a most easy suggestion that a man's hostel might be planted on our ground, and I think it is quite possible that unless something is done this may be carried out in a short time."

I mention that to show the danger of giving the authorities power to take the property of private people, not to meet a public demand, but because it is convenient. I hope it is not too late for the Government to ask for more information. I am told the difficulty is that, having passed this Ordinance, they cannot get out of it very well, although they admit the hardship. I think the Government might render valuable help by asking that the matter should be further considered. The notice of compulsory acquisition was given in November, when all the members of the Committee had left Simla for Calcutta. They are still away, but, notwithstanding this fact, the inquiry is to be held on March 3rd. I venture to think your Lordships will agree that, unless a public need is really shown, it is rather hard that these young women should have their home taken away from them, and the Association left without the possibility of finding another place within their means.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, if I were to answer the Question of the noble Lord in detail I should detain your Lordships at an extreme length, because it would be necessary for me to explain the provisions of the law in India relating to the acquisition of property. I hope it will be sufficient if I deal with the particular case which the noble Lord himself has mentioned, and touch rather briefly upon the general law dealing with the subject as a whole. The main facts outlined by the noble Lord are not, I think, in dispute. The house in question is quite close to some of the public offices of the Government of India, and has been rented for a great many years by them as an observatory. There was an opportunity of buying the land itself in 1903 on behalf of the Government, but as other buildings were being erected on an adjacent site it was not thought necessary. Opportunity was then taken by the organisation in which the noble Lord is interested to buy the house. Subsequently the Government of India became enlarged, and therefore further office accommodation became necessary. I can assure the noble Lord that there is no personal reason for the acquisition of this property. The property is required for the extension of the Government offices.

*LORD KINNAIRD: I cannot see how this house could have been used as an observatory, as it is at the bottom of a hill.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: I understand that it was used as a meteorological office, and I daresay for that purpose it would be equally efficient at the bottom of a hill. Again, it is not unlikely that there are scientific offices connected with it for which the site is perfectly convenient. Your Lordships will see at once that this is a matter upon which the Government on the spot must be trusted. It is not really possible, in a matter of this kind, for the Secretary of State to intervene or to try to put pressure of any sort upon the Viceroy or the Government of India. I may say, however, on behalf of the Secretary of State that he has already expressed his sympathy with the trustees and his wish to find a *modus vivendi* if possible. Communications have been addressed to Lord Minto, and it is not impossible that some arrangement will be arrived at, but in a place of the character of Simla it is a matter of necessity that the Government should have the first claim on the site. The Secretary of State quite realises that the association may be placed in a position of considerable inconvenience if the compulsory acquisition is proceeded with, and there is very little doubt that the Government of India will give the matter every possible consideration. Upon the general question of acquisition of land, the Government of India will be asked to prepare a document showing the state of the law, but I hope the noble Lord will be satisfied with a copy, and will not think it necessary to have it printed and circulated.

*LORD KINNAIRD: I shall be quite satisfied with that, and I beg to thank the noble Earl for his sympathetic reply.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 28th February, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz.:—Gas Companies (Removal of Sulphur Restrictions) Bill; Mitcham and Wimbledon District Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Barry Railway Bill.—"To enable the Barry Railway Company to construct new railways and waterworks; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Rawtenstall Corporation Bill.—"To authorise the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Rawtenstall to construct and work tramways and to provide and work omnibuses; to confer further powers upon them in relation to their electricity and market undertakings; to authorise them to construct a street work, and to acquire lands, and to make further provision with regard to the health, local government, and improvement of the borough of Rawtenstall; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill.—"To extend the time for the compulsory purchase of lands and for the completion of works for the South Eastern and London Chatham and Dover Railways; and to authorise the raising of additional capital by the South Eastern Railway Company; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888.

Copy presented of Orders made by the various County and County Borough Councils in England and Wales under

Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS.)

Copy presented, of Return of Proceedings during the month of January, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BANKRUPTCY COURTS (IRELAND).

Annual Returns presented, of the Official Assignees of the Court of Bankruptcy in Ireland and the Local Courts, Belfast and Cork, for the year 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY, ETC., BILLS.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 27th February; *Mr. Lloyd-George*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 57.]

LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

Copy presented, of Statements of Accounts, and of Life Assurance and Annuity Business and Abstracts of Actuarial Reports, deposited with the Board of Trade during the year ended 31st December, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 58.]

PIERS AND HARBOURS (PROVISIONAL ORDERS).

Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Trade of their Proceedings under The General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861, and the General Pier and Harbour Act (1861) Amendment Act, Session 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 59.]

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the City of Cardiff, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Riverside and Canton Wards of the City [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES ESTIMATES, 1907–8).

Estimate presented, of the sum required for the year ending 31st March, 1908, to defray the Expense of the Ordnance Factories [by Command]; referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 60.]

ALIENS (NATURALISATION).

Address for "Return showing the names of all Aliens to whom Certificates of Naturalisation have been issued and whose Oaths of Allegiance have, between the 1st day of January, 1906, and the 31st day of December, 1906, been registered at the Home Office, giving the country and place of residence of the person naturalised, and including information as to any Aliens who have, during the same period, obtained Acts of Naturalisation from the Legislature (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 93, of Session, 1906)."—(*Mr. Herbert Samuel.*)

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS (REGULATIONS.)

Return ordered, "showing (*a*) the names of the Councils of boroughs and urban and rural districts who have made Regulations under the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order of 1885; and (*b*) the number of Councils of each class who have not made any such Regulations."—(*Dr. Rutherford.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Evicted Portnagaran Fisherman.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that Norman Macdonald, joiner and fisherman, Portnagaran, Island of Lewis, finding that the house which he occupied on the Matheson estate was insanitary, built a substantial stone dwelling from which he, his wife, family, and infant grand-children were evicted during the winter; and, seeing that possession of the dwelling was regained by a daughter during Macdonald's absence from the district, will he explain why he has been ordered to appear before the sheriff for breach of interdict.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The information which I have received is as follows:—Norman Macdonald, joiner, Portnagaran, occupied, since March, 1889, a house, formerly a store, at a rent of £1. He let one end of it to another man, but failed to pay his own rent. Without any application to the estate he, in 1903, proceeded to build a house on the crofter's common grazing, in contravention of the Crofters' Act. Before the house was roofed it was discovered by the ground officer, and Macdonald was interdicted. Subsequently it was found that he had completed it and occupied it, and on 15th March, 1905, he was brought before the sheriff for breach of interdict, and fined 10s. or four days, with 21s. expenses. The fine of 10s. was paid. In autumn, 1905, it was found that Macdonald had again occupied the house, and he was tried for breach of interdict on 4th July, 1906, and fined £5 or thirty days, with £3 6s. expenses. After ten days Macdonald was released on payment of the £5. He was ejected from the house, and went to reside with his family in a barn or a croft in the same district. On 17th January, 1907, he was again found in occupation of the house, and also he was assisting another man to erect a house in contravention of the Act. He was served with complaint for breach on 23rd January. About a week later he removed himself to the house he had formerly occupied. On 21st February he appeared before the sheriff in answer to the citation served 23rd January, but as the solicitor in charge of the case failed to prove that Macdonald himself was in the house, and had omitted to include Macdonald's family in the indictment, the case fell through, but Macdonald received a serious warning from the sheriff. It is not the case that Macdonald was evicted during the winter, nor that he was away from the district.

Tempo Postal Facilities.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General if arrangements could be made to enable letters to be posted on the mail car running between Enniskillen and Tempo, county Fermanagh, or to authorise the mail car driver to accept letters *en route* for posting at Enniskillen or Tempo; is he aware that there are very few post offices along this route and that delivery of letters to the mail car as it passes would be a very great convenience; and, if he cannot see his way to have an open bag on the car, would he authorise the driver, if willing, to accept letters for posting.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have called for a Report on this subject, and will acquaint the hon. Member with the result.

Threadneedle Street Telegraph Office.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the date on which an official of the medical department last visited the instrument room of the Threadneedle Street telegraph office for the purpose of reporting upon the ventilation; whether he can state the nature of that Report; and whether, in view of the repeated complaints made by the staff, some steps may be taken to investigate the matter, with a view to remedying the defects.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The office was last medically inspected in the summer of 1906. Steps were taken to improve the ventilation of the instrument room, and it was reported that the result is satisfactory. A complaint which has recently been received with regard to the heating referred also to the ventilation, and I have called for a further Report.

Overtime by Threadneedle Street Telegraphists.

MR. CREMER: To ask the Postmaster-General whether telegraphists at the Threadneedle Street office are compelled to perform overtime on account of clerical work, while the Department rewards them with time off in lieu; whether the rule of the Post Office is that overtime is rewarded at the rate of a rate and a quarter paid in cash; whether he is aware that, in August, 1906, a number of the staff petitioned the authorities asking to be awarded the usual compensation; and whether an answer can now be given to their appeal.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The general rule is, and has been, that the amount of work expected from an officer, without overtime, is forty-eight hours a week, or forty-five hours allowing for meal relief; and, inasmuch as none of the officers concerned appear to have worked that amount, I should not be justified in paying for overtime. An answer to this effect has been conveyed to the memorialists. Where overtime is performed the officer in question has the option of accepting pay or time off.

Exports to the Philippine Islands.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can give the values of our exports from the United Kingdom to the Philippine Islands separately for the last ten years.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The following statement gives the information asked for by the hon. Member:

Statement showing the value of merchandise exported from the United Kingdom to the Philippine Islands in each year from 1897 to 1906, inclusive, distinguishing the Exports of British and Irish and of Foreign and Colonial Produce separately.

Years.	Value of Merchandise Exported to the Philippine Islands.		
	British and Irish Produce.	Foreign and Colonial Produce.	Total.
	£	£	£
1897	400,264	23,869	424,133
1898	216,178	13,343	229,521
1899	413,043	25,592	438,635
1900	1,142,896	57,891	1,200,787
1901	862,711	51,167	913,878
1902	813,620	40,872	854,492
1903	663,204	43,192	706,396
1904	1,414,942	119,206	1,534,148
1905	2,130,850	299,110	2,429,960
1906*	1,527,122	36,132	1,563,254

* Provisional figures, subject to rectification.

Note.—The particulars for each of the years from 1897 to 1904 include the value of the exports to Guam and other Ladrone Islands. Those for 1905 and 1906 include exports to Guam.

Army Horses and Motor Buses.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he has any official information showing that the rapid increase in the number of motor omnibuses will largely increase the difficulty of finding horses for the artillery in time of war; and if so, what steps he proposes to take to meet it.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The London General Omnibus Company and the Road Car Company have now refused to have their horses registered, and therefore the increase in motor omnibuses in London does not directly affect the number of horses registered. It is, however, quite clear that the disuse of horses for omnibus traction generally must affect the number of horses available for military purposes in the country. The whole question of the supply of horses in time of war is at the present time being very thoroughly considered.

Army Horses.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the number of horses bought for the Army, during the last year for which figures are available, in the United Kingdom, in Foreign Countries, and in British Possessions outside the United kingdom respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The figures for the year 1905–6 were as follows—

United Kingdom	3,145
Foreign Countries	*Nil*
British Possessions	207

Army Recruits from the Militia.

MR. FIENNES (Oxfordshire, Banbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state how many recruits have been enlisted into the Regular Army from the forty-six Militia battalions below 500 in strength during the past five years.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The figures are as follows:—Number of men enlisted into the Regular Army during the last five years from those battalions which on 1st November, 1906, had a strength of under 500 officers and men.

N.B.—It must be remembered that in several instances prior to the foregoing date the strength was over 500.

Units.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	Total.
3rd Battalion Royal West Surrey	436	270	274	224	166	1,370
3rd ,, Royal Lancaster	171	118	156	76	44	565
4th ,, ,,	156	122	137	72	43	530
3rd ,, Lincoln	58	74	58	53	53	296
4th ,, ,,	32	38	38	34	23	165
3rd ,, Devon	75	42	42	34	40	233
4th ,, ,,	67	35	48	53	38	241
3rd ,, Somerset Light Infantry	89	77	55	57	45	323
4th ,, ,, ,,	126	82	68	64	54	394
3rd ,, Cheshire	130	72	74	41	58	375
3rd ,, Royal Welsh Fusiliers	45	21	17	27	16	126
4th ,, ,, ,,	8	5	7	13	24	57
4th ,, South Wales Borderers	18	16	24	6	10	74
3rd ,, Gloucestershire	154	143	152	140	180	769
4th ,, ,,	65	46	53	33	40	237
6th ,, Worcestershire	125	153	109	95	93	575
3rd ,, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.	13	13	11	7	17	61
3rd ,, Border	59	15	24	8	13	119
4th ,, ,,	22	6	14	5	3	50
3rd ,, Sussex	171	180	152	114	148	765
3rd ,, Dorset	119	54	44	71	75	363
4th ,, Oxford Light Infantry	72	76	46	28	47	269
3rd ,, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.	89	63	93	67	62	374
3rd ,, Northamptonshire	129	170	131	112	179	721
3rd ,, Royal Berkshire	125	108	129	67	102	531
3rd ,, Shropshire Light Infantry.	58	65	59	30	40	252

Units.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	Total.
4th Battalion Shropshire Light Infantry.	29	20	49	15	17	130
5th ,, King's Royal Rifle Corps.	17	29	19	6	29	100
3rd ,, Wiltshire - - -	139	150	181	126	141	737
3rd ,, Royal Scots Fusiliers -	38	38	36	32	46	190
3rd ,, King's Own Scottish Borderers.	38	36	41	28	38	181
3rd ,, Scottish Rifles - -	115	102	94	47	67	425
3rd ,, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders - -	41	63	53	33	47	237
3rd ,, Inniskilling Fusiliers -	12	20	16	23	8	79
4th ,, ,, ,, -	33	24	51	20	17	145
5th ,, ,, ,, -	33	45	31	12	36	157
8th ,, King's Royal Rifle Corps	43	19	40	5	11	118
3rd ,, Royal Irish Fusiliers -	83	86	70	35	33	307
4th ,, ,, ,, -	31	10	20	8	16	85
5th ,, ,, ,, -	8	21	10	5	6	50
3rd ,, Connaught Rangers -	31	24	15	16	15	101
4th ,, ,, ,, -	23	38	20	27	20	128
3rd ,, Leinster - - -	—	47	34	35	11	127
4th ,, Munster Fusiliers -	35	39	27	25	23	149
3rd ,, Dublin Fusiliers - -	55	41	87	106	94	383
6th ,, Rifle Brigade - -	40	30	23	21	26	140
Total - - -	3,456	2,946	2,932	2,156	2,314	13,804

Chinese Coolies in the Transvaal.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies how many Chinese coolies there were in the Transvaal on the 1st February, 1907; and how many there were there on the 1st May, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) There were 53,856 Chinese on 31st January, last, and 49,832 on 30th April last. The official figures are not received for the first day of the month, but for the last.

Jamaica Earthquake—Ruined Traders.

SIR SAMUEL SCOTT (Marylebone, W.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he is aware that numbers of traders in Jamaica have been totally ruined owing to the insurance companies not being liable to pay for damage caused by the earthquake and fire resulting therefrom; and whether the Government will give a grant from the Imperial Exchequer for the purpose of helping these traders to again start business.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The matter is receiving the earnest consideration of the Secretary of State, but I am not in a position to make a statement at present.

Prolongation of British Patents.

MR. J. D. WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state how many British patents, which have been prolonged beyond the term of fourteen years, are still in force; and, in the case of each of such patents, what is the name of the patentee, the year and number of the patent, and the date on which the period of prolongation will expire.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) There are three such patents. No. 5,718 of the year 1883, granted to Illius A. Timmis and Stanley C. C. Currie, the period of prolongation of which will expire on the 12th December, 1907; No. 15,159 of the year 1888, granted to J. C. Thompson, which will expire on the 22nd October, 1909; and No. 8,700 of the year 1892, granted to C. F. Cross, E. J. Bevan, and C. Beadle, which will expire on the 7th May, 1911.

German Patent Laws.

MR. J. D. WHITE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can say what are the provisions of the German patent law as to the revocation of German patents on the ground that the patented articles are not manufactured in Germany; and can he mention any recent instances in which German patents have been revoked under these provisions.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) Section 11 of the German Patent Law of 7th April, 1891, provides, *inter alia*, that: "The patent can be revoked at the end of three years from the date of the official publication of the grant: (1) If the owner of the patent neglects to put the invention into practice within the realm to an adequate extent, or, at any rate, to do everything that is necessary to ensure such carrying out of the invention." It appears from the Annual Reports of the German Patent Office that patents are revoked every year under these provisions.

County Down Railway.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that the County Down Railway Company has discontinued first and second class accommodation between Belfast and Holywood and intermediate stations, except by a few trains daily, and have refused to issue third class subscribers' tickets on the motor cars, thus compelling subscribers to pay at least second class fares and travel third class; and whether the Board of Trade will cause inquiries to be made in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The Board of Trade are in communication with the railway company in this matter and will inform the hon. Member of the result.

Examinations for Apprentices and Boy Artificers.

SIR ARTHUR BIGNOLD (Wick Burghs): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty in reference to the examination of apprentices and boy artificers in the Royal Navy advertised to be held in London, Portsmouth, Devonport, Chatham, Pembroke, Sheerness, and Cork, if he will include among the places at which the examinations are to take place the cities of Glasgow and Inverness, in order that Scotsmen may not be debarred by distance from sharing in the competition.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) As the regulations for the annual examination in May next for dockyard apprentices and boy artificers have been published, and the necessary arrangements made, no change can be made in the centres of examination this year, but the matter to which the hon. Member draws attention will be considered before the examination in May, 1908.

Naval Meat Supplies.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what quantity of meat was used by the Navy in 1905; from where was it obtained, distinguishing British, the Colonies, and Dependencies of the Empire, and foreign countries respectively; and the cost or amount paid to each of those three divisions for the supplies.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) It is presumed that the hon. Member's Question refers to fresh meat. The quantity used in the Royal Navy during the year ended 31st March, 1906, was 20,115,500 pounds. The source of supply in any particular year depends upon the movements of His Majesty's ships, as fresh meat is always obtained at the ports visited by them, and it would not be possible, without much labour, to extract the information asked for in the latter part of the Question, as the official records do not distinguish the quantities bought in the United Kingdom, the Colonies, and British Dependencies, from those obtained in foreign countries.

Rifles on Warships.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether rifles are ever used in warships for any other but drill purposes and landing parties; and whether the Board can see their way to reducing the number of men, other than marines, who endeavour to obtain proficiency in this weapon to the exclusion of purely naval work.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Rifles are used for musketry practice in addition to the purposes mentioned. It is considered that the time devoted to obtaining proficiency in the use of the rifle is not too great.

Naval Stokers and Rifle Practice.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether stokers do rifle practice at the naval ranges; and, if so, whether the Board will take into consideration the desirability of putting an end to the waste of time and money involved in making this branch of the Navy do work which is in no way connected with the engine-room duties for which they were entered.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Stokers carry out rifle practice when their services can be spared for this purpose. It is not proposed to make any change in this respect.

Uganda Railway Expenditure.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the total capital sum that has been expended upon the construction and equipment of the Uganda Railway; what further sums have been provided by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom to meet losses incurred in the working of the line; what is the annual sum chargeable to the line for interest on capital; and what is the total debt accumulated for unpaid interest; and whether he will arrange that in the accounts of the railway annually presented to Parliament, the full indebtedness of the line to the taxpayers of the United Kingdom shall be clearly shown and the interest annually due upon that debt clearly stated.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The total capital sum expended upon the construction and equipment of the Uganda Railway to the 31st March, 1906, is £5,398,733 18s. 2d. The further sums provided by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom to meet losses incurred in the working of the ine amounted to £107,461 5s. 3d. on the 31st March, 1905, since when there has been a profit on working. Nothing is chargeable to the line for interest, and there is no debt accumulated of unpaid interest. The funds for construction were borrowed from the Consolidated Fund, and are being repaid by annuities charged on the Vote for Colonial Services. A statement of the annuities created to the end of 1904 was published in the Parliamentary

Paper (Cd. 2716) of 1905, and, as it accounts for £5,311,000 out of the total referred to above, it has not been thought necessary to publish any further statement.

Poplar Union Medical Officers' Salaries.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether inquiries have been made into the proposed increases of salaries to the outdoor medical officers of the Poplar Union; if so, what were the reasons advanced for refusing such increases; was a salary of £150 paid in one division of the union in 1900, though the number of persons entered on the medical register was only 1,050; and is a salary of £140 now being paid in the same division, while the number for the past twelve months is 3,152, showing a decrease of £10 in the salary, while the work has increased by more than 300 per cent.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Local Government Board considered the application made to them in this matter, but it appeared to them undesirable that a permanent increase should be made in the salaries of the officers referred to. I presume that the particular case mentioned in the Question is that of the Bromley District of the union, the medical officer of which received a salary of £150 in 1900. According to statements supplied by the guardians the number of orders for medical attendance in this district (excluding paupers on the permanent list) was 1,044 in 1900 and 2,246 in 1906. A new officer was appointed for the district in 1901 at £130 per annum and his salary was increased in 1904 to £140 per annum.

Married Women's Poor Law Liabilities.

MR. L. HASLAM (Monmouth Boroughs): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether in view of the fact that the Court of King's Bench held, on appeal, that a married woman with ample separate estate cannot be compelled to contribute towards the maintenance of her parent or parents, while a man under similar circumstances can be legally compelled to do so, he will introduce legislation to remove this inequality.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) As I have stated in reply to previous Questions, I have taken note of this point, but I cannot promise to introduce legislation on the subject at the present time.

Vaccination Order.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Vaccination Order, promised on the 14th instant to be circulated in a few days, is now ready for publication; whether such Order will take effect from the beginning of the next half-year, 25th March; and whether, if such Order is to come into force on that date, he will cause it to be issued in good time for the boards of guardians throughout the country to consider its provisions and make their necessary arrangements.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Order is in an advanced state of preparation, and will be issued as soon as practicable. I will take care that there shall be a suitable interval between the date of its issue and that on which it comes into operation.

Fishery Board Rates.

MR. LEWIS HASLAM: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he will consider the advisability of introducing a Bill on the lines of the recommendation made by the late Royal Commission on Salmon Fisheries for the protection and preservation of such fisheries, by which fishery boards may be empowered to levy a rate on fishery owners for that purpose.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) My noble friend hopes to introduce a Bill on the lines of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Bill of last session, which will enable effect to be given to the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Income-Tax Collection.

MR. RENDALL (Gloucestershire, Thornbury): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Surveyors of Taxes and Income Tax Commissioners are authorised to ask individuals and firms for copies of their balance sheets, disclosing their liabilities and capital, as distinguished from and in addition to their trading or revenue accounts, and such information about plant as is usually furnished to enable them to arrive at a correct assessment.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) Taxpayers are not under obligation to disclose their balance sheets for the purpose of the making of an assessment upon them, and they may refuse to do so when asked. On the other hand there is nothing to prevent Surveyors of Taxes and Income Tax Commissioners from asking for such information, and many individuals and firms are glad to supply it, as the best way of arriving at a fair assessment and of avoiding dispute. In the event of an appeal, Commissioners have power to demand full information.

Severe Sentence on an Amritsar Syce.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will cause inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which a syce in the service of Mr. Cason, magistrate of Amritsar, India, was recently subjected to a criminal prosecution for accidentally injuring his employer's trap, and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment; and will he state why so severe a penalty was imposed for an offence of this character.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I have no information as to the case mentioned. It is open to the accused to appeal to the proper court for a revision of his sentence.

The Chowkidari Tax.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India, having regard to the fact that the Chowkidari Tax, which is levied for the remuneration of village watchmen, presses heavily on the agriculturists of Bengal, will he state whether the Bengal Government have yet reported as to the expediency of remitting the tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Answer to the Question is in the negative.

Dublin Public Buildings.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St, Patrick): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the public buildings at Dublin, especially the Custom House, Four Courts, and Post Office, have been neglected for years past and require to be cleansed and renovated; and whether he will cause expert inquiry to be made, and take measures to have those buildings suitably renovated.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I have already informed the hon. Member that these buildings are in need of no structural repair. Their cleansing, however desirable, is not a pressing need and should, in my opinion, be postponed to works of greater urgency which have to be provided for. I do not understand that the state of these buildings compares unfavourably with that of many public buildings in this country.

College of Science, Dublin.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that a long period has elapsed since the plans of the College of Science, Dublin, and the College at Glasnevin were adopted and the money earmarked for immediate expenditure; and, seeing that there is a dearth of employment in the building trade in Dublin, whether he will arrange that the work should be commenced at once, and that Irish materials, including slates, shall be utilised.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that the works in connection with the new College of Science were commenced in March, 1905, and that the building will be completed to the level of the ground floor in a few weeks. Similarly, the building of the new residences for King's scholars at Glasnevin are, I understand, rapidly approaching completion. I have already answered numerous Questions about the building materials for the College of Science, to which I have nothing further to add except that, as flat roofs will be used, no slates will be required. The buildings at Glasnevin are not within the cognisance of the Board of Works, but there can obviously, at this stage, be no question of changing the materials.

Carrick-on-Shannon Evicted Tenant.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if the Estates Commissioners have received an application for reinstatement from Mrs. Eliza Noone, for her former holding at Kiltycarney, Carrick-on-Shannon, on the Rowley estate, in county Leitrim; and if a Report will be made thereon.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received Mrs. Noone's application, and will have it inquired into in due course.

Ballinamore Evicted Tenant.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he has received an application for reinstatement from Hugh Fox, Lisicairn, Ballinamore, on the McGovern and Harlison Estate, in county Leitrim; and if an inspector will be sent to inspect the farm.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received the application, and have referred it to an inspector for inquiry and report.

Drumsna Evicted Tenant.

MR. THOMAS F. SMITH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if the Estates Commissioners have received an application for reinstatement from Mrs. Bridget Moran for her holding at Minkill, Drumsna, on the Rowley estate, in county Leitrim; and if the same will be considered.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received and investigated Mrs. Moran's application, and have decided that, as the applicant already possesses a sufficient farm, they will take no action in the matter.

Cloone Evicted Tenant.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if the Estates Commissioners have received an application for reinstatement from Thomas Fitzpatrick, Lisgillock, Cloone, an evicted tenant on the Ruthven estate, in county Leitrim; and if steps will be taken to have him restored.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have not received an application from Thomas Fitzpatrick, but have received one from Rose Fitzpatrick, of Lisgillick, and this has been referred to an inspector for investigation.

Cloonsherevagh Evicted Tenant.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if the Estates Commissioners have received an application for reinstatement from Mrs. Jane M'Dermott for the farm which she formerly held at Cloonsherevagh, Carrick-on-Shannon, on the Hatley Manor estate, in county Leitrim; and if an inspector will be sent to inspect the farm.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have received no application for reinstatement from Mrs. Jane M'Dermott.

The Rowan Tributary.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he has received a petition from a number of tenants on the Crofton, Clements, and Massey estate, in the county Leitrim, and who resides in the Eslin drainage district, in Mohill union, with reference to having the Rowan tributary, in the same district, cleaned, as, owing to its present condition, the crops of the tenants on the above estates are being continually flooded, and consequently they suffer great loss; and, if so, will he say what action he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The Board of Works inform me that they have no knowledge of the petition in question. If, however, any persons are aggrieved by reason of neglect on the part of the Eslin District Trustees to maintain the Works in the district their proper course is to write to the Board, who will give the matter full consideration.

Mr. Robert Pearson's Queen's County Estate.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can state the grounds upon which a sum of £195 is retained by the Estates

Commissioners from Mr. Robert Pearson, Clonmore, Errill, Ballybrophy, Queen's County, out of the purchase money of his estate at Ballyquaid, near Ballybrophy, which he sold to the tenants under the Land Act of 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the purchase money of the estate referred to was distributed in August last, when a sum of £6 6s. was retained for costs. No further amount was retained.

Labourers' Cottages at Banbridge.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the scheme for the erection of twenty-four labourers' cottages in the Banbridge Union, county Down, which was sanctioned after the Local Government Board inquiry of 19th December, 1905, whether he can explain why an arbitrator has not been appointed, and what steps the Local Government Board is taking to expedite the appointment.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are unable to appoint an arbitrator until the rural district council make application to them for that purpose. The board have twice addressed the council on the subject, but the necessary application has not been received. A further communication is being sent to the council.

Meenlaragh Port.

Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Irish Government and Congested Districts Board have received a memorial praying for the improvement of the port of Meenlaragh, or Phahalen, county Donegal; and whether it is proposed to carry out the work in view of the importance of the herring fishery to the inhabitants of this district.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Irish Government received the memorial in question, and referred it to the Congested Districts Board for consideration. The Board have since fully considered the matter, and have arrived at the conclusion that, if any funds should be available, they could be expended with more advantage at another place than Meenlaragh on that part of the coast of the county Donegal.

Army Meat Supplies.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: To ask the Secretary of State for War, if he will state the quantity and cost of the meat consumed by the Army in 1905; from what sources was it obtained, British, the Colonies of the Empire, and from Foreign countries respectively; and the approximate amount paid to each of the three divisions for the supplies.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The quantity of meat used by the British Army in 1905 is estimated at about 45,000 tons. As regards the latter part of the Question there are no statistics available at the War Office of such a detailed character as would enable me to give the information required, and it is more than doubtful whether such information if obtained by means of special returns, would be at all reliable.

Discharged Soldiers' Claim—Ex-Private Gillen, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether, in the case of John Gillen, late No. 999, 6th company, 1st battalion Royal Irish Regiment, who was discharged at Chelsea in 1885, a sum of 19 rupees, to which he was entitled, was never paid to him; and whether he will direct that this be now done, and that the compassionate allowance for sick and disabled soldiers be granted to him, as he is now in a very poor state.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Nothing is known of the matter referred to in the first part of the Question, nor could any such claim be inquired into after a lapse of twenty-two years. As regards the second part of the question there is no form of compassionate allowance for which he is eligible.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Battleships with Nucleus Crews.

Mr. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, when the thirteen battleships which are being, or are going to be, laid up with reduced nucleus crews of seventy-three men have been in that state for six or eight months, they will be unfit for service unless much time and money is spent on them; and, if so, if it is the intention of the Admiralty to allow them to be sold.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Answer is in the negative to both parts of the Question.

Stoker-Mechanician Watchkeeper.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how far it is understood that by the new regulations the stoker-mechanician watchkeeper, whether warrant officer or not, will take precedence of the actual trained mechanic of the artificer class in the engine-rooms of our battleships.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: There is no question of precedence in the relations of engine-room artificers and mechanicians, both being chief petty officer ratings. It is not contemplated that these two ratings will be employed at watch-keeping duty in the same engine room. The warrant officer, whether of the artificer or mechanician class, being of superior rank, would have disciplinary authority both as regards engine-room artificers and mechanicians.

Engine Room Artificers.

MR. ALDEN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how far the Selborne Memorandum will become inoperative as a result of the relegation of the engine-room artificers to repair work only, and their divorce from watch-keeping duties; and how far will the new regulations affect those who joined the senior service under the old conditions.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Selborne Memorandum will not become inoperative as a result of the revision of the respective duties of the engine-room artificers and mechanicians. The new duties to be allotted to the mechanician will not affect the pay, rank, or prospects of advancement of the engine-room artificer, though the numbers of the class will be gradually reduced.

Ipswich Artillery Barracks—Wage Dispute.

MR. J. WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the nature of the Report made to his Department by the Board of Trade relating to the wages of labourers in the Ipswich district; and what are the present wages paid by the contractors to the men employed upon the Artillery Barracks, Ipswich.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The Report was in favour of the view that 5d. an hour was the current rate for builders' labourers at Ipswich. All labourers employed by contractors to the department on work at the barracks are now paid that rate.

Army Contracts for Preserved Meat.

MR. HUNT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, why it is that, although our Colonies supplied the Army with very nearly half our supply of preserved meat during the whole period of the late Boer War, during the years since the war nearly all the preserved meat has been bought from foreign countries, and only a very small amount from our own Colonies.

MR. HALDANE: The Colonies are invited to tender to meet every demand, but on account of drought or the shortness of stocks they are not always able to quote for delivery as required. In many cases they are beaten by price.

Belturbet Barracks' Water Supply.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the military authorities at Belturbet have made frequent complaints to the district council as to the insanitary condition of Lanigan's well, from whence supplies are drawn for the troops; whether he is aware that the Cavan Rural District Council have refused to remedy the insanitary state of the well; whether he is acquainted with the reasons for this refusal; and what steps he intends to take to protect the health of the troops at Belturbet.

MR. HALDANE: The General Officer Commanding reports that complaints have been made and have been the subject of correspondence between the Belturbet Urban District Council and the Cavan Rural District Council. The well is within the jurisdiction of the latter body, who are understood to decline action at present. The reasons for this refusal are not known. Further inquiries are being made.

MR. LONSDALE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Chairman of the Cavan Council declared that the council would not tax the ratepayers for the sake of keeping the military in Belturbet as he hoped they would at the end of the year when they got Home Rule clear the English garrison out of the country altogether.

[No Answer was returned.]

Royal Arsenal Explosion.

SIR W. EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the men temporarily thrown out of employment in the Royal Arsenal, owing to the recent explosion, have suffered any loss of pay; and, if so, whether it is proposed to grant them any compensation.

MR. HALDANE: A certain number of men were temporarily thrown out of employment, but they will not suffer any loss of pay.

Agricultural Instruction in India.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called by the Government of India to the need for the development of agricultural instruction; and whether he will favourably consider any representations on this matter from the Indian Government.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E): Schemes have been sanctioned by the Secretary of State and by his predecessor for the expansion of the Agricultural Departments of the several provinces, and these schemes make provision for agricultural colleges. A central college for all India has also been established. The recommendations of the Government of India in this matter will continue to receive the Secretary of State's most careful consideration.

Transvaal Upper House.

MR. ALDEN: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether in constituting the Upper House in the Transvaal, the leaders of Het Volk, the largest Party in the State, were consulted; and, if not, would he state why so few Members of that Party have been nominated to the Upper House.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N. W.): My hon friend will recollect that on Thursday last in reply to a Question of his I fully explained the method of constituting the Upper House in the Transvaal Legislature.† I cannot say how far the Governor thought it expedient to consult unofficially the Leaders of the various political Parties when he was preparing a list of suitable nominees for the Legislative Council, but the Secretary of State was satisfied that the nominations were good and that they fully and adequately represented the different sections of political opinion in the Colony. There can, of course, be no question of revision now. I may add that Lord Selborne has telegraphed "I am satisfied that Legislative Councillors will perform their task impartially and justly with a single eye to the welfare of the Transvaal and South Africa without regard to the particular interest of any one race or Party and that proof of their suitability will be found in their practical work."

MR. ALDEN asked whether the Colonial Office had received any specfic protest from either of the Parties in the Transvaal.

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, Sir. I believe that telegraphic notice of protest on behalf of the Het Volk and Nationalist Party has already been received.

MR. ALDEN: Is it not extreme probable that there will be a conflict between the two Chambers?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) asked when the names of the nominated Members would be laid before the House.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1032.

MR. CHURCHILL: They have been published already and are quite accessible. It will be convenient very soon to lay further Papers on the Table, and that will be the best way of bringing the names formally before the House.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Was the list of names submitted in the first place to the Government and do his Majesty's Government accept full responsibility for the nominations?

MR. CHURCHILL: The names were submitted to his Majesty's Government and we accept full responsibility for all the nominations.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): Has a protest come from the new Government in the Transvaal, and will any answer be given?

MR. CHURCHILL: There is not at present, in any official or formal sense, a new Government in the Transvaal.

White Labour on South African Mines.

MR. FIENNES (Oxon, Banbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state what experiments have been made in white labour by Mr. J. B. Robinson on the Randfontein group of mines; and, if any, whether these experiments have been a success.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir. I have no information on the subject.

MR. FIENNES asked whether Mr. Robinson did not say that he was going to employ white labour under Mr. Cresswell, and why that experiment had not been proceeded with.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Robinson has been greatly obstructed in this experiment by the obstacles, which were raised in uninterrupted and almost interminable succession, to his efforts to obtain fresh supplies of native labour in South Africa. But I understand that those obstacles are now being gradually removed; and, as Mr. Robinson has given £5,000 towards the relief of distress on the Rand, it appears that he is in earnest.

MR. FIENNES: When Mr. Robinson has acquired this native labour, will he release the 15,000 Chinese coolies who are now employed by him?

MR. CHURCHILL: That is a question which should be addressed to Mr. Robinson.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): Are we to understand that these obstacles were peculiar to the case of Mr. Robinson? Who is responsible for them?

MR. CHURCHILL: That is departing very far from the original question.

German and British Trade Treaty.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the nature of the most-favoured-nation arrangement between the United Kingdom and Germany; when that arrangement terminates; and what steps it is proposed to take respecting its renewal.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Under a German law, which authorises it, most-favoured-nation treatment is at present given to the British Empire with the exception of Canada. I have no reason to suppose that the arrangement will not be continued so long as we give most-favoured-nation treatment to Germany.

Trawling in the Moray Firth.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware of the consequences which must follow on the opening of the Moray Firth to trawlers, and of the desire of the people to lay before him, by deputation, their views on the subject; and if he will consent to receive such a deputation.

SIR EDWARD GREY: A similar Question is being addressed to the Prime Minister, and I have nothing to add to the reply which he will give.

British Subject Hanged at Warsaw.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received any official Report showing that a British subject,

A. J. Tingle, has been tried by court-martial and hanged at Warsaw for robbing a tram conductor; and, if so, what action he intends to take in the matter.

SIR EDWARD GREY: His Majesty's Consul-General at Warsaw reported on February 9th that one of the criminals guilty of the armed robbery of a tramway conductor, and caught in the act, was a British subject, Adolphus Tingle, the grandson of an English clerk who married in that town. I have not so far received any official Report of this person's trial by court-martial and execution, but unless these are shown not to have taken place in accordance with the law at present in force in Russian Poland there is no ground for any action on the part of His Majesty's Government.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Am I to understand he was not a British subject?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I understand he is.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: And he has been hanged for robbery?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I said so.

Egyptian Autonomy.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the declaration of Lord Cromer in his Report for 1904 that, although it may take a long time to arrive at Egyptian autonomy in the full sense of the term, at the same time that autonomy is the ultimate goal towards which reform should gradually be directed, he can state what reforms in that direction have been inaugurated since 1904.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I would refer the hon. Member to Lord Cromer's published Report for the year 1905, and to his Report for last year, which will shortly appear. They show in detail the reforms carried out since 1904.

Egyptian Agricultural School.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, seeing that during the four years 1902–5 the average number of pupils in the Egyptian Agricultural School has been only fifty-nine, of whom nearly one-half have been of other than Egyptian nationality, and that the annual increase is still slight, he will advise the Egyptian Government to consider the expediency of giving the instruction in the college in Arabic instead of in English, with the view of attracting students.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The facts will be found in Lord Cromer's Annual Reports. For the reasons given in previous Answers, I do not think it desirable to interfere with the discretion of the Egyptian Government in this matter.

Egyptian Colleges—Professional Classes.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether some years ago Egyptian professional colleges held classes in the afternoon and evening so as to enable Government employees to qualify for professional careers or superior Government posts; and, if so, why that practice was discontinued in opposition to the wishes of many would-be pupils.

I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that in the primary and secondary Government schools of Egypt no instruction is given in the sciences of botany, biology, and physiology; and whether he will advise the Egyptian Government to remedy this defect.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Both these Questions relate to matters of administrative detail, and though it is true that British influence is and should be used to encourage and promote education, Lord Cromer's Reports show that this has received great attention, and I do not think it is desirable or possible to do it more effectively by sending special instructions piece-meal on matters of detail.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: Is it not the duty of the Government to see that instruction is given in these subjects?

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): Is instruction in the sciences of botany, biology, and physiology given in the primary and secondary schools of the United Kingdom ?

SIR EDWARD GREY: That Question should be addressed to the Board of Education. It is true that the British Government do exercise a general supervision with a view to encouraging education in Egypt, but I do not think it could be used in the most effective way by sending separate instructions on matters of detail. I am quite ready to take into consideration any points suggested by my hon. friend, and will bear them in mind when discussing the general question with the Egyptian authorities. But I cannot undertake to send separate instructions on matters of detail.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: Have the Government any intention of reopening the whole question of education with Egypt.

SIR EDWARD GREY: It does not need reopening; as the Report shows it is constantly receiving attention and being discussed between Lord Cromer and the Government.

The Arabic Language in Egyptian Schools.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, seeing that in the Egyptian Government's decree of 22nd June, 1893, it was expressly provided that the Arabic language should be the basis or medium for the teaching of all subjects in the Egyptian schools, he will say whether this decree has been carried out.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I beg to refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave him on the 26th instant.† I have no reason to doubt that the provisions of this decree are carried out. The provisions are as stated in my Answer on February 21st.‡

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: But it was laid down that Arabic should be the basis or medium of instruction. Is that being habitually disregarded ?

SIR EDWARD GREY: According to my recollection the decree provided that the curriculum in Government schools shall include instruction in Arabic. My hon. friend suggests that all the instruction given in the schools shall be in Arabic. I do not read it so. I said the other day that in consequence of the deficiency of the Arabic teachers the Government often had to choose between very inferior instruction or no instruction at all, or giving it in some language other than Arabic, but they were doing their best to train native teachers to give instruction in Arabic.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON asked whether there was not an abundance of text-books in Arabic before the British occupation, and that since then teaching in Arabic had been systematically allowed to drop.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I should wish to be assured that the Arabic text-books, if they do exist, in these sciences, were thoroughly up to date.

SIR GILBERT PARKER asked whether it was not the fact that most educated Egyptians desired that French and English should be taught, wherever possible, as the commercial languages of the country.

*SIR EDWARD GREY: I have no doubt that is the case; but at the same time, as Arabic is the native language of the country, I should deprecate, when instruction can be efficiently given in Arabic, the use of other languages to the exclusion of Arabic.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Cannot the natives be taught the Irish language ?

Egyptian State Railways—Pay of Railway Guards.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the pay of railway guards on the Egyptian State railways is, as stated in a recent petition by them, only £4 10s. per month, which is insufficient to support a family in Cairo; whether, in view of the statement in the petition as to their hours, he will state what these are; and whether he will instruct the British Agent at Cairo to advise the Egyptian Government to improve the position of the petitioners in both respects, seeing that the salary of the director-general of the railway has lately been raised from £2,000 to £2,500, and those of the traffic manager and chief engineer to £1,500.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1402.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1036.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have no information on the subject. The matter is one of administrative detail on which it would be unusual and undesirable for His Majesty's Government to send special instructions to interfere with the Egyptian Government.

Mr. Bryce.

MR. LIDDELL (Down, W.) I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the rule of the Civil Service which required the late Marquess of Dufferin and Ava to be retired from the post of British Ambassador at Paris in 1896, when he attained the age of 70, and Sir Edmund Monson to be retired from the same post in 1904 on attaining the age of 70, will be enforced in the case of Mr. Bryce, the British Ambassador at Washington; and whether, seeing that Mr. Bryce will attain the age of 70 in May of next year, he will receive a pension for a tenure of 15 months service of the British Embassy at Washington.

SIR EDWARD GREY: My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The Prime Minister has the power to recommend to the King the retention of an Ambassador's services after the age of 70 if it is in the interest of the public service. This power was exercised three times in the case of the late Lord Pauncefote. No Ambassador is entitled to a pension unless he has served ten years abroad, and has completed 15 years from the date of his first commission.

Case of Stewart Burrows.

MR. J. WARD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of a man named Stewart Burrows, an engine driver, who was charged at the Lambeth police court on 29th January with stealing lead, and sentenced to six weeks hard labour; whether the prisoner's employer sent a thirteen years good character; and whether, in view of the fact that this was the first offence, he will consider the advisability of ordering his immediate discharge.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I have made inquiry into this case, but I regret that I can find no sufficient grounds for recommending any reduction of the sentence passed on the offender. The magistrate in passing sentence took fully into consideration the prisoner's excellent character.

Case of Millie Marsh.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the observations of the magistrate at the Westminster police court last week, when committing for trial one Millie Marsh on a charge of perjury, to the effect that, though the prisoner had not brought herself within the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act, she ought to have legal aid; and whether he will give further consideration to the question of amending the said Act with a view to making it more elastic.

MR. GLADSTONE: Arrangements have been made for the defence of Millie Marsh. The learned magistrate, as I understand, on reconsideration of the circumstances of the case, felt able to grant a certificate under the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act.

Factory Inspectorships.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any gentlemen who have passed examinations for factory inspectors are still without appointments; whether the appointment gazetted on 11th January last was the result of success at an examination or otherwise; and whether any exception has been made regarding the salary paid to this last appointment.

MR. GLADSTONE: It usually happens that of the candidates nominated to compete for a certain number of vacancies, one or two, in addition to the successful candidates, obtain the number of marks required to qualify; but such candidates have not been regarded as having a claim to be appointed to any future vacancies that may arise, and the hon. Member will see that to do so would involve the lowering of the standard of the persons appointed to the inspectorate. The gentleman whose appointment was gazetted on 11th January was a successful candidate at the examination in August last for the Home and Indian Civil Services; and he was selected from the successful candidates in that examination with a view to his filling the post of secretary to the Chief Inspector of Factories, for which special qualifications are required. The post carries with it, in addition to the ordinary salary of a junior inspector, an allowance of £50 a year.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Is this gentleman described as a factory inspector?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Has he been added to the staff?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, he is one of the staff.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Is there no difference between the work that requires technical qualifications of a factory inspector, and work which might very well be done by a first or second-division clerk?

MR. GLADSTONE: Special qualifications are needed for this post.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Are we to understand that this gentleman will not become a fully accredited inspector until he has passed the qualifying examination for that position?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, that applies to all factory inspectors.

Assessment of Mine Workings.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider the advisability of placing upon the inspector of mines the duty of notifying the overseers when underground mining operations are about to be extended from one parish to another, so that the overseers of the parish newly affected may be enabled to get the necessary information for entering the new workings upon their valuation lists.

MR. GLADSTONE: The power of entry and inspection is given to the inspectors to enable them to ascertain whether the provisions of the Mines Regulation Acts are being observed. It is a well-established rule that information obtained by an inspector in the course of his visits with regard to matters not connected with the discharge of his official duties is treated as confidential; and I think the hon. Member will see that any departure from this rule would affect the relations of the inspectors with the mineowners and seriously prejudice the enforcement of the Acts for the protection of the miners.

Naturalisation Fees.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department has his attention been drawn to the increasing settlement of Jewish inhabitants in Manchester, Salford, and other large towns of the Kingdom; is he aware that many of them desire naturalisation in this country, but are precluded from obtaining it by the fees they are called upon to pay; and will he explain why these fees are maintained at a prohibitive figure.

MR. GLADSTONE: The fee for the grant of a certificate of naturalisation has for the last twenty years been £5. The number of certificates granted every year is considerable, varying in the last five years from 686 to 978, and there is every year in addition a certain number of refusals. The average number of grants for the five years 1892–6 was 494, and for the five years 1902–6 was 850, an increase of about 70 per cent. It should be remembered that an alien must live for five years in this country before he can be naturalised, and if the saving of £5 during that period presents any difficulty, that difficulty is greatly lessened by the existence of a number of agencies which enable him to accumulate the sum on payment of very small weekly subscriptions.

Slate Club Defalcations.

Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General if his attention has been directed to the numerous defalcations which occurred at Christmas 1906, as at previous Christmases, in connection with unregistered friendly societies and slate clubs; and if he can see his way to introduce legislation to deal with this subject.

Mr. GLADSTONE: My hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. I fear I can add nothing to the Answer which I gave to the hon. Member in reply to a similar question which he put to me a few days ago of which I am sending him a copy.

West Ham Poor Law School.

Mr. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that the children's school under the West Ham guardians is seriously overcrowded; and if he is prepared to compel the guardians in question to find proper school accommodation for the children under their care.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): Since my hon. friend asked me a Question on this subject in July last, the guardians have hired premises in East Ham in which 153 children are now accommodated. I am, however, aware that overcrowding at the schools at Leytonstone still exists, and I have recently received a Report from the assistant inspector of the district, in which attention is called to the subject. I have brought this Report under notice of the guardians and have requested that it may receive their immediate and earnest attention, and that I may be informed of the result. My hon. friend may be assured that I shall not lose sight of the matter.

London Unemployed.

Mr. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the appeal from the Central Unemployed Body for London asking for charitable contributions to the funds of that body for providing work for the unemployed; whether such an appeal is in keeping with the speech made by him on 19th July last, in which he stated that the Government Grant of £200,000 was to be in lieu of the Queen's fund, raised for the relief of the unemployed in 1905–6; and whether, seeing that he has still a considerable balance of the Government Grant in hand, he will see his way to supplying the Central Unemployed Body with sufficient funds to carry on its work without these appeals to public and private charity.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I have seen the appeal referred to. The Unemployed Workmen Act contemplates that the expenses incurred by the local bodies under it in providing or contributing to the provision of temporary work will be defrayed out of voluntary contributions. The object of the Grant was to afford a means whereby the voluntary contributions might be supplemented in cases where there was exceptional need for assistance in meeting the expenses to which I have referred. It was not intended that these contributions should be superseded. I am not aware that my speech of 19th July last contains anything contrary to this view.

West Ham Distress Committee.

Mr. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will take steps to secure that the Grant to the West Ham Distress Committee under the Unemployed Workmen Act, sent on Thursday last, and amounting to £7,000, divided into £4,000 for emigration, and £3,000 for relief works, shall be amended to give a larger sum for relief works than the amount specified.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: Sums amounting to £6,000 have already been paid out of the Grant in respect of the works mentioned in the Question. When forwarding the recent payment of £3,000 I asked for certain information, and upon receipt of it, I shall be prepared to consider whether a further sum can properly be granted in respect of these works.

Mr. THORNE: Is it not a fact that the Grant of £7,000 was sent to the Treasurer of the Committee on Thursday last, and not on Tuesday, as stated by the right hon. Gentleman in his speech in the unemployed debate?

MR. JOHN BURNS: The money may have been sent on the Thursday, but the intention to send it and the decision so to do were come to two days sooner.

MR. THORNE: Were not the letter and cheque both dated the 21st?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I do not know. I am more anxious about people getting the money than in asking how the money was sent.

MR. THORNE: And I am more interested as to the truth of the statements of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I may say that the relations between the West Ham Distress Committee and myself are business-like, kindly, and prompt, and it is only in this House that, on occasion, the opposite is represented to be the case.

Post Office Telephone Construction—Wages of Navvies.

MR. J. WARD: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the contractors for constructing Post Office telephones at High Barnet and Finchley are at present paying the navvies engaged upon such work 6d. per hour, the trade union rate being 7d.; and what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I understand that there has been a doubt whether the London rate applies to places so far out as Barnet and Finchley. I am making inquiry into the matter.

Provincial Postmasterships.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that dissatisfaction exists in the postal service owing to the appointment as provincial postmasters of officials from the London central departments, in spite of applications made by well qualified provincial postmasters and chief clerks through their surveyors, in accordance with official circular No. 1,703 of 20th February 1906, and while provincial servants have no opportunity of appointment to London vacancies; and whether he can give any assurance that in future the surveyors' recommendations of officers possessing experience and knowledge of the duties of a postmaster shall have first consideration.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not aware that dissatisfaction exists in the postal service owing to the appointment of London officials to provincial postmasterships. The number of such appointments conferred on officers of the central department is very small in proportion to the total number of vacancies. It is my aim to fill the appointments by the selection of the most suitable candidates, irrespective of the locality or office in which they happen to be serving. The circular to which the hon. Member refers was general in its application, and gave no indication of any special preference for provincial postmasters or chief clerks.

Teachers' Pensions.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W. R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, what was the total sum paid from the Teachers Deferred Annuity Fund in pensions to superannuated teachers last year; what is the total number of teachers now receiving such pensions; how many teachers are now contributing to this fund; and when the actuary's Report as to the state of the fund will be presented to Parliament.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The total sum paid from the Deferred Annuity Fund in pensions to superannuated teachers during the financial year ending 31st March, 1906, was £608. The total number of teachers in receipt of annuities from the Fund on 31st March, 1906, was 809. It is impossible to state exactly the number of teachers contributing to the fund on any date, but it may be taken as approximately equivalent to the number of certificated teachers in employment, which is about 86,000. Considerable progress has been made with the actuarial inquiry, but I am not yet in a position to say when the Report will be presented.

Welsh Education Department.

MR. LLEWELYN WILLIAMS (Carmarthen District): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education where the new Welsh Department of the Board of Education will be located; whether Mr. Owen M. Edwards or Mr. Alfred T. Davies, or both of them, will reside in London; if not, where; whether the two new officials will have co-ordinate authority and will be answerable to the President alone, or whether one, and, if so, which, will be subordinate to the other; what will be their relations respectively to the present chief inspector of elementary schools in Wales and to the Welsh Central Board; and whether it will be part of the duty of the new Department to issue a separate Education Code for Wales.

Mr. McKENNA: The Welsh Department will be located at Whitehall. Both Mr. Edwards and Mr. Davies will have their headquarters in London, but the former will spend a considerable portion of each month in Wales. Each of the two new officials will be responsible directly to the President of the Board. Their duties will be distinct, and, though I am not prepared, least of all at so early a stage as the present, to lay down hard and fast rules as to the respective duties of a secretary and a chief inspector, the distinction will be mainly that between the administrative and the more strictly educational aspects of the Board's work. The present divisional inspector of elementary schools in Wales retires in a few months and his post will then lapse. The relations of the new Department to the Central Welsh Board will be those of the Board of Education to that Board. Whether or how soon a separate Code of Regulations for Elementary Schools in Wales will be considered advisable I am not yet in a position to determine, and I shall naturally wait until I have been able to consult my new advisers.

Agricultural Teaching in Elementary Schools.

Mr. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, having regard to the general complaints as to the unsuitability to agricultural needs of the education given in the rural elementary schools in Great Britain, as evidenced in the Report on the decline in the agricultural population of Great Britain, 1881–6, he will take steps to effect the desired alterations in the codes governing the instruction given in such schools.

Mr. McKENNA: So far as public elementary schools are concerned, the Code provides very fully for suitable courses, suitable teaching staff, and suitable equipment in the way of school gardens, materials for rural nature-study, etc. That these provisions are not yet taken advantage of as widely as is desirable is due to the inherent difficulty of finding or training sufficient teachers suitably qualified for these matters and willing to serve in small rural schools. With a view to mitigating this difficulty the Board have also introduced into their regulations a special optional course in rural science for students in training colleges.

Medical Inspection of School Children.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, in view of the fact that medical officers of health are unanimously of opinion that if the medical inspection of school children is to be effective, particularly in preventing skin diseases, and so enabling middle-class parents to send their children to the provided schools, that power should be given to the local authorities to pass by-laws compelling the attendance of parents at these examinations, whether he will, in the proposed Bill, provide for such power being given.

Mr. McKENNA: Without expressing any opinion on the intrinsic merits, I think it is extremely important that every possible chance of smooth working should at the outset be given to the system of medical inspection, and that no conditions should be attached which would increase the existing difficulties or tend to excite objections from parents or others.

Grangemouth Waterworks Fatality.

Mr. J. WARD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a fatal blasting accident at Grangemouth waterworks, near Stirling, on 13th February, by which one man was killed and two others badly injured; whether his Department has been informed of the cause and circumstances connected with the explosion; and what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport): The Home Office inform me that an investigation of the causes of this accident will be made by one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, who will also attend the inquiry to be held by the Procurator Fiscal.

Food Imports.

*MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can give separately the items of revenue for the calendar year 1906 on articles of bodily consumption imported into the United Kingdom from the Colonies and India; and also from foreign countries.

MR. KEARLEY: I have been in communication on this subject with my hon. friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who informs me that no statistics are compiled at the Customs showing from what countries goods delivered for Home consumption have been imported. Accordingly the Board of Customs are unable to supply the information desired.

*MR. R. DUNCAN: Will the Board of Trade take steps to get the figures?

MR. KEARLEY: The hon. Gentleman had better put that Question to the Financial Secretary of the Treasury.

MR. CATHCART WASON: What is meant by "bodily consumption"?

*MR. R. DUNCAN: Mr. Speaker, am I permitted to answer that Question?

[No Answer was returned.]

Exports to the Philippine Islands.

*MR. R. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can give the values of our exports from the United Kingdom to the Philippine Islands separately for the last ten years.

MR. KEARLEY: I propose to give these figures, so far as they are available, in the printed Answers to Questions.†

Canadian Tariffs.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, seeing that particulars of the draft tariffs of Germany, Russia, Roumania, and other foreign countries were submitted to the Commercial Intelligence Committee, whether similar steps have been taken in respect of the Canadian tariff proposals, submitted to the Canadian Parliament on 29th November, 1906, and now in operation; whether, following the precedent established in the case of the German tariff, any report by the Committee is in preparation, and will be communicated to the Canadian Government; and, if so, whether such report will show the changes in the duties and customs regulations of Canada, and the operation of the surtax, the intermediate tariff, rebates for Home consumption, and the bounties.

MR. KEARLEY: No, Sir; the Canadian tariff proposals have not been referred by the Board of Trade to the Commercial Intelligence Committee.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the President of the Board of Trade consider the advisability of making such a reference?

MR. KEARLEY: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will address that Question to my right hon. friend.

Agricultural Education in Scotland.

MR. MENZIES (Lanarkshire, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somersetshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, seeing that the grants awarded in the year 1905–6 by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries for agricultural education and research throughout the country amounted to £10,905, and that out of this amount the total grant awarded to Scotland was £250, more regard will be given in future to the claims of Scotland for a larger grant, and one more in proportion to the amount of taxation which that country pays to Imperial Revenue; and whether arrangements will be made whereby the county councils in Scotland would be more utilised by the Board of Agriculture as an intermediary for the spread of agricultural education and research in the counties by the allocation amongst them of any increased grant.

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† See Col. 214.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): The administration of the grant made for agricultural education in Scotland rests with the Scottish Education Department. It appears from the last annual Report of that Department that a total sum of £7,645 was granted in the year 1904–5 to the three Scottish agricultural colleges, so that it is Scotland and not England and Wales which is in the more favourable position, if the amount of taxation paid to the Imperial Revenue is taken into account. The £250 to which my hon. friend refers consisted of special grants for experiments and research, and in this respect also the claims of Scotland were fully recognised, the corresponding grant for England and Wales amounting to only £105. Perhaps my hon. friend would address his concluding Question to my right hon. friend the Secretary for Scotland.

Vandeleur Estate Evicted Tenants.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will ask the Estates Commissioners why the evicted tenants on the Vandeleur estate, their cases being settled, have not been reinstated so as to enable them to carry on the spring work on their farms; and whether he will use his influence with the Commissioners to have all these evicted tenants reinstated immediately.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners inform me that the investigation of the owner's title, and other formal proceedings, will take a considerable time. As, however, the Commissioners have no reason to anticipate any difficulty in regard to the title, they have now suggested to the owner that the evicted tenants should at once be placed in possession, so that free grants may be made to them in order that they may commence to work their farms in the present season. There has not yet been time for the Commissioners to hear from the owner in the matter.

Scariff Relieving Officer.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will direct the Local Government Board in Ireland to sanction the appointment of the Scariff Guardians of Mrs. Reedy to the position of relieving officer of the union.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board decline to sanction the appointment of Mrs. Reedy as relieving officer in place of her husband, who has been compelled to resign that office. A complaint was made against Mr. Reedy, and upon investigation the Local Government Board found that he had been guilty of falsifying his books and withholding for long periods the outdoor relief ordered to the poor, thereby risking their lives. The Board regard the proposed appointment of Mrs. Reedy as a subterfuge, and tantamount to re-appointing her husband.

Larkfield Evicted Tenant.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any application for reinstatement has been received by the Estates Commissioners by an evicted tenant, named John Matthews, who claims to be entitled to an evicted farm at Larkfield, near Granard; if so, why it was that the inspector did not call on him as well as the other evicted tenants in the locality; and, if not, will he now direct the inspector to inquire into this man's case.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have not yet received from John Matthews a formal application for reinstatement, but he has recently written asking for a form of application, and this will be sent to him.

Town Tenants (Ireland) Act Rules.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the draft rules for working the Town Tenants (Ireland) Act have yet been framed; and, if not, when a copy of them is likely to be available.

MR. BIRRELL: Draft rules under the Town Tenants Act have been framed, and are being considered by the rule-making authority. The rules will be published as soon as they have been settled.

Irish Board of Works Loans—Case of Christopher Reynolds.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what is the unpaid balance of the debt due by Christopher Reynolds, Abbeylara, county Longford, on foot of his loan from the Board of Works; whether there is any profit rent arising out of the management of this estate; and, if so, when Reynolds may expect to get it.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury, who answers for the Board of Works, that the arrears of principal and interest now due by Christopher Reynolds amount to £243. The estate is in the hands of a receiver, but the net receipts are not sufficient to meet the half-yearly instalments payable to the Board of Works, so that there is no prospect of any money being payable to Reynolds.

Derryheelan Land Dispute.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that John Byrne, of Derryheelan, county Longford, claims to be entitled to an even half of the lands purchased by himself and a co-tenant named Mulleady, whereas he now alleges that the latter has an acre of land more than he has; and will he direct the Estates Commissioners' inspector to visit and report on this case.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are unable without fuller particulars to identify the case referred to in the Question. If the hon. Member will furnish the name of the Vendor of the estate upon which Byrne's holding is situated, the Commissioners will have the matter looked into.

Colonel Caddell.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state when Colonel Caddell was appointed registrar of petty sessions clerks in Ireland; what were his qualifications for that office; had he to undergo any test examination before appointment; what is his salary; and when does he vacate the office.

MR. BIRRELL: Colonel Caddell was appointed Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks in November, 1891. His previous official experience was acquired during a service of twenty-three years in the Army, and three years as a Resident Magistrate. The appointment is one made by the Lord-Lieutenant without examination. Colonel Caddell receives a salary of £800 per annum, and holds office during good behaviour.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): Is this Colonel Caddell the gentleman appointed by the late Government who was in charge at Tipperary at the time of trouble?

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Seeing that a new *régime* is now being inaugurated in Ireland will the right hon. Gentleman remove this gentleman from a position he is so unfit to retain?

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): And is this the gentleman who recovered £2,000 damages for libel against a Tipperary Nationalist newspaper?

MR. BIRRELL: I know nothing about the gentleman except the facts I have already enumerated.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into his records?

MR. BIRRELL: They seem to be too varied.

Evicted Tenants in Leitrim County.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many evicted tenants in county Leitrim have been reinstated since the passing of the Land Act of 1903; and in how many instances, in the same county and on what estates, have the landlords refused to allow the inspectors from the Estates Commissioners to inspect the holdings of the evicted tenants.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that thirty evicted tenants have been reinstated in county Leitrim. In four instances landlords have refused to allow an inspection of evicted farms in that county. The Commissioners do not think it desirable to publish the names of these landlords.

Drumsna Evicted Tenants.

Mr. THOMAS F. SMYTH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have received a joint application for reinstatement from Henry Lenaghan and Thomas Kelly for the farm formerly held by them on the Simpson estate at Lisdalkey, Drumsna, county Leitrim; and, as this estate has been sold to the Irish Land Commission, what steps will be taken to have those tenants restored.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received the application in question, and have referred it to an inspector for inquiry and report. No proceedings for the sale of the estate appear to be pending before the Commissioners.

Game Rights in Queen's County.

Mr. DELANY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants upon the estate of Mr. Guy B. Pilkington, 8, Leinster Street, Dublin, situated at Boston, parish of Aughaboe, Queen's County, had agreed to purchase their holdings, at a price named by the landlord, including game rights; whether Lord Castletown, who leased the game rights from Mr. Pilkington, has since purchased the property over the tenant's heads in order to secure the game; and, if so, will the Estates Commissioners intervene to effect a settlement in this case.

Mr. BIRRELL: The only property belonging to Mr. Pilkington which has been sold through the Estates Commissioners consists of two farms purchased by the tenants in 1904, and in these cases the sporting rights were reserved to the vendor. No proceedings for the sale of any other property of Mr. Pilkington's have been instituted before the Commissioners, and they have no knowledge of any sale to Lord Castletown.

Mr. DELANY suggested that the Commissioners should, in the interests of the peace of the district, approach the landlord.

Lord Wall's Court Estate.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, is he aware that the tenants on Lord Wall's Court estate, New Grove, Kilrickle, Loughrea, signed agreements to purchase in November, 1905; that the tenants were processed for the gross unreduced rent in January of the present year; and that His Honour Judge Anderson put a stay of execution on the decrees pending the completion of the sale; and whether, in view of the small size of the tenants' holdings, ranging from £2 to £8, and the possibility of making their holdings economic out of the two untenanted farms on the same property, he will instruct the Estates Commissioners to interfere with a view to an equitable settlement.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that no proceedings for purchase by the tenants on Lord Wall's Court estate have come before them, but the Commissioners themselves are negotiating for the purchase of certain grass lands on the estate. They have no knowledge of any proceedings for the recovery of rent which the landlord may have instituted.

Loughrea Untenanted Lands.

Mr. DUFFY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the late Mrs. Gowing offered to sell her estate in Dartfield, Kilrickle, Loughrea, consisting of 900 acres of untenanted land, to the Estates Commissioners in November, 1905; and, seeing that the estate is one out of which great improvement could be effected in the holdings of a number of small farmers in the locality, as well as in the direction of providing for the evicted tenants, whether he will state what is the cause of the discontinuance of the negotiations opened by Mrs. Gowing for the sale of this estate; and whether he will ask the Estates Commissioners to get into direct communication with the executors of this estate, with a view to purchase.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners cannot trace any record of negotiations for the purchase by them of this estate, but if particulars as to the present owners are furnished to them, they will make further inquiries.

Derry Island Lands.

Mr. HOGAN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that negotiations are going on between Lord Avonmore and the Estates Commissioners as to the sale to the tenants of the lands of Derry Island and Belleisle, in the parish of Lorrha, and county of Tipperary; can he say whether in July last the Estates Commissioners received a petition from the tenants on the property, some of whom have only a few acres of cut-out bog, asking them, if a sale should take place, to give them, the tenants, portions of the untenanted grass lands; and will he use his influence with the Estates Commissioners in carrying out this purpose.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are not aware of any negotiations for the sale of this estate which may be in progress. The Commissioners have received the petition referred to, and will give it due consideration in the event of proceedings for sale being instituted before them.

Contempt of Court in Ireland.

Mr. DELANY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is his intention to introduce a Bill this Session dealing with the law of contempt of Court in Ireland.

Mr. BIRRELL: There is no intention of introducing separate legislation for Ireland in regard to contempt of Court. The law in this matter is the same in England as in Ireland. The Government will consider the entire matter, which is not in a satisfactory state, at a convenient opportunity.

Mr. DELANY: Mr. Bryce promised a Bill for Ireland.

Mr. BIRRELL: I have repeated that promise.

Mr. DELANY: It was to be for Ireland alone.

Mr. BIRRELL: I am told the law is exactly the same in the two countries.

Draughtsman of Irish Bills.

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the salary of the draughtsman of Bills to the Irish Government is now £900 per annum; who is the present holder of this office; when was he appointed; where does he reside; and has he received any subsistence allowance to which he was not entitled.

Mr. BIRRELL: The salary of the Irish draughtsman of Bills is now £900 per annum. The present holder of the office is Mr. Richard Manders, K.C., C.B., who was appointed in 1891. Mr. Manders now resides in London, as it has been found that he can discharge his duties more effectively in London than in Dublin; but he visits Ireland when required to do so. There has been some discussion as to his title to receive subsistence allowance during the time he has resided in London; and this discussion has been terminated by giving him a fixed allowance to cover his residence in both countries. The hon. Member will find full particulars of the matter in the Appropriation Accounts recently presented to Parliament (page 265).

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY: Does this gentleman make any return of how he spends his time?

Mr. BIRRELL: I may say that the salary is not more than a fair remuneration for valuable services, and it compares very poorly with salaries paid to corresponding officials in English offices.

Irish Poor Law Union Clerks.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is in accordance with the rules of the Local Government Board that the clerk to a Poor Law Union should reside in the licensed house of his father who is chairman of the board of guardians, that a relieving officer should live in his mother's licensed house and distribute relief therein, and that a rate collector should reside in a public house, the licence of which is held by his wife, and collect rates therein; and what steps the Local Government Board propose to take to enforce the observance of their rules upon the Cahirciveen Board of Guardians and Rural District Council.

MR. BIRRELL: No rule has been made by the Local Government Board in regard to the place of residence of a clerk to a Poor Law Union. Under the Board's general regulations, no person can be appointed as a relieving officer who is engaged in retail trade, and outdoor relief may not be paid in a public house. The Public Bodies Order provides that no person may be appointed a poor-rate collector who is engaged in retail trade, or any member of whose family is so engaged. The Board have no information that these regulations are being violated in the district mentioned in the Question.

MR. LONSDALE: Will the right hon Gentleman make inquiries locally?

MR. BIRRELL: Inquiries have been made with the result I have stated.

Orpen's Estate, County Kerry.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estate of Olive G. Orpen and another, in the county of Kerry, is now in the Land Judge's Court; and, if so, will he direct the attention of the Estates Commissioners to the fact, with the view of negotiating a sale of the estate; and whether he will also call the attention of the Estates Commissioners to the fact that the owners' solicitors who represented to them that they were negotiating with the tenants for a direct sale to them failed to keep their appointments to meet the tenants on three separate occasions.

MR. BIRRELL: This estate is in the Land Judge's Court. The Estates Commissioners have offered their services as conciliators, under the Lord Lieutenant's Regulations, with the view of facilitating a sale to the tenants. As, however, a Receiver has recently been appointed by the Land Judge, it would appear that the Regulations do not apply to the case. The Land Judge informs me that a sale to the tenants was substantially agreed upon a year ago, but as some of the tenants repudiated the agreement the owners declined to go on with the negotiations. The Land Judge has now appointed a day for the discussion before him of the matter, and will give the tenants an opportunity of being heard.

Killinchy Disturbance.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to attacks on the house of a man named Henderson, in Killinchy, East Down, which was in the possession of bailiffs; whether any damage was done to person or property; whether the sale of the goods was boycotted by the local Unionists; and whether peace has been restored to this disturbed district.

MR. BIRRELL: The police authorities inform me that on the night of the 14th instant some young men shouted and jeered when passing Mr. Henderson's house, of which bailiffs were in possession. No attack was made on the house, and no damage was done. The subsequent sale of Henderson's goods was not boycotted. The district has not been in a disturbed condition.

Shirley Estate, Monaghan.

MR. M'KEAN (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that negotiations for the sale and purchase of the Shirley estate, in the county of Monaghan, have been proceeding for some time past; whether he is aware that the trustees of the estate, through their solicitor, have been using various improper means of inducing unwilling tenants to buy their holdings at exorbitant rates; whether he is aware that an application has been made to the Estates Commissioners asking them to declare two electoral divisions tenanted by 400 occupiers an estate for the purpose of sale and purchase, such sale and purchase being opposed by the other tenants, numbering 1,400; whether such piecemeal sales are contrary to the spirit of the Act of 1903; and whether, under such circumstances, he will instruct the Estates Commissioners not to sanction the proposed sale, or at least to delay their sanction until such a date as will enable the tenants who refuse to buy on the proffered terms time to put their views before the Estates Commissioners on the whole question.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that there are upon the Shirley estates about 1,200 agricultural tenants. The great majority, namely 550, of the tenants situated within one compact block comprising nearly forty townlands, have agreed to purchase their holdings, while the tenants outside that block have declined to purchase on the same terms. There are over fifty evicted tenants whose holdings are scattered throughout the entire estate, and the vendor proposes to sell these holdings to the Commissioners in order that the evicted tenants may be reinstated. The Commissioners propose to declare the compact block described, together with the evicted farms, to be a separate estate for the purposes of the sale, in order that the evicted tenants may be reinstated at once. The Commissioners hold that it would be unjust to deprive the tenants in a compact block on a large property like this of the benefits of land purchase, and at the same time to deprive the evicted tenants of the opportunity of reinstatement, because other tenants have not agreed to purchase. The vendor's solicitor has informed the Commissioners that no steps have been taken to realise the rents due which would not have been taken in the usual course in any other year. The Commissioners have already intimated their willingness to hear the views of the tenants who have declined to purchase, and are still prepared to hear them.

In reply to a further Question,

MR. BIRRELL said it was unfortunate that the tenants on one half of the estate were willing to sell, while those on the other half were not. The holdings of the evicted tenants were scattered over the whole estate, and that was the difficulty.

Ballyalla (Clare) Postal Arrangements.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will order a letter-box to be placed at Ballyalla, County Clare, for the convenience of the residents of the district.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The difficulty in this case arises from the extremely small number of letters likely to be posted, and from the fact that the erection of an ordinary letter-box on the site suggested would involve more than the usual expense. I will, however, make further inquiry with the view of ascertaining whether a small letter-box could be put up at Ballyalla cross-roads without special expense. I will communicate the result to the hon. Member in due course.

Longford Post Office.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that, owing to defective construction and arrangement of departments, persons wanting to transact business at Longford post office are often kept standing from ten minutes to half an hour; whether a rearrangement of desks can be made whereby each department, stamps, telegrams, money orders, and parcels, can be separated by lengthening the present counter and taking away the postmaster's office; and will he direct an inquiry into this matter.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I will inquire into the matter.

Postal Districts in Ireland.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will state the reason which induced his department to transfer Longford from the Dublin to the Northern District surveyors; whether he is aware that communication is far more direct between Longford and Dublin than between Longford and Belfast; and will he now reconsider the matter and place Longford again in charge of the Dublin District surveyors.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: As the hon Member was informed by my predecessor on 7th March, 1904, Longford and other towns were transferred from the Midland District to the Northern District, in order to equalise the size of the two districts as far as possible, and thus promote efficiency and economy; and I do not propose to disturb the arrangement. The hon. Member is mistaken in thinking that the headquarters of the Northern Surveying District are in Belfast. The headquarters of all three Irish Surveying Districts are in Dublin.

Procedure Committee.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the Procedure Committee is to meet again to consider the proposal placed before it that it be a recommendation that business be so arranged that the session should end each year not later than the end of June.

The PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The Procedure Committee has not been reappointed this session. The House has not yet considered all the proposals which were reported to it last year. I hope, however, that these proposals will be dealt with before Easter. As to the rearrangement of the session, that is a matter which must be proposed by the Government on their own responsibility.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask whether there is any intention of reappointing this Committee, because the members understood that this particular proposal with regard to the session and other matters would be considered by them?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think we have looked, as yet, beyond the duty which lies on us of dealing with the proposals already made by the Committee.

Irish Tobacco Bill.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the support promised on behalf of the Government to the Irish Tobacco Bill, he will give facilities for its passage into law.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, Sir; it is impossible at this stage for the Government to promise facilities for any measure for which they are not themselves directly responsible.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND inquired whether, if this Bill passed Second Reading, the Government would offer any objection to its being sent to one of the Grand Committees.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I hope that will be the fate of the Bill.

Moray Firth.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he is aware of the consequences which must follow on the opening of the Moray Firth to trawlers; of the desire of the people to lay before him, by deputation, their views on the subject; and if he will consent to receive such a deputation.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: We are well acquainted with the circumstances of this controversy. His Majesty's Government are doing everything in their power to enforce the law and to protect the interests concerned; and I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by my receiving a deputation at present.

Government Boards.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that there has never been a meeting of the Board of Trade, the Local Government Board, or the Board of Agriculture, and taking into consideration the present constitution of these Boards, he will consider the desirableness of introducing a measure for reconstituting them upon a representative and expert basis.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I see no reason for altering the constitution of these Boards which appear to work harmoniously and efficiently.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Can the right hon. Gentleman give any indication as to the course of business next week?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that if Votes A and 1. of the Army Estimates were obtained that day, on Monday the first order would be the Army Supplementary Estimates. Then the Army Bill would be introduced, and afterwards the report stage of Votes A and 1. of the Army Estimates would be taken. On Tuesday they would endeavour to get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Navy Estimates. On Wednesday they would take the Navy Votes A and 1., and Vote 10. On Thursday, if the Navy Votes were obtained, they proposed to take the Civil Service Vote on account.

NEW BILLS.

POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

"To amend the Law respecting the Superannuation of Police Constables," presented by Mr. Samuel Roberts; to be read a second time upon Friday, 22nd March, and to be printed. [Bill 80.]

ADVERTISEMENTS REGULATION BILL.

"To authorise local authorities to make by-laws respecting the exhibition of Advertisements," presented by Mr. Hart-Davies; supported by Mr. Wyndham, Sir William Brampton Gurdon, Lord Balcarres, Sir Charles Schwann, Mr. Butcher, Mr. MacNeill, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr. Beale; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 81.]

WEEKLY REST-DAY BILL.

"To secure a Weekly Rest-day," presented by Mr. Clarke; supported by Mr. George White, Mr. Steadman, Mr. Bertram Straus, Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Corrie Grant, Mr. Remnant, and Mr. Charles Price; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 82.]

EDUCATION (ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS) BILL.

"To make provision for the better administration by the central and local authorities in England and Wales of the enactments relating to Education," presented by Mr. McKenna; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 83.]

SMALL HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) (NO. 2) BILL.

"To establish a Department of the Board of Agriculture in Scotland and to facilitate the provision of Small Holdings in Scotland, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Munro Ferguson; supported by Sir Thomas Glen Coats and Sir Edward Tennant; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th March, and to be printed. [Bill 84.]

SUPPLY [1ST ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 190,000, all ranks, be maintained for the service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding His Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908."

*CAPTAIN KINCAID-SMITH (Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon) continuing his speech said that the test of the scheme must include the Regular Army and the territorial Army taken together. The real test must be whether it would provide us with that war machinery and give us that expanding Army which would be required in time of emergency, or in any great war. He agreed that an expeditionary force of 150,000 men was rather large. But as they had got these men owing to the linked-battalion system he thought they might as well have it efficiently organised as an expeditionary Army. What they wanted was a small Army sufficient to provide an Indian and Colonial garrison and a small striking force in England in time of peace as well as give us an expansible Army in time of a great war. He did not think anyone contemplated having in England an enormous standing Army which would compete with Continental forces. What we wanted was a small force which could compete with European forces in localities where they could not bring their large numbers to bear. Such forces would be required on our frontiers where we might be subjected to an attack by a foreign Power, such as in Egypt, Canada, and Afghanistan. They might, perhaps, put Canada and Egypt on one side—especially Egypt—whilst we maintained our naval supremacy. The only remaining place, therefore, was the Indian Frontier, and that was the whole problem. The question they should ask themselves was, Did the scheme meet the test, viz: that by the scheme they would have such machinery as to enable them to provide a large force, after six or more months notice, as would be required to defend the frontier. The answer was in the affirmative, on one condition; and that was that the men would be forthcoming for the territorial Army. He believed that the scheme was the best that could be brought forward at the present time and with present materials. Of course, if the men did not come forward then it would fail; no doubt they would do so to a certain extent; but whether their numbers would be sufficient was a matter upon which they could not speak definitely. He wished also to make one criticism on the Speech of the hon. Member for the Abercromby Division when he remarked that the territorial Army would not be liable for service abroad. No one had ever suggested that it would. Of course not. We should always have to rely for the reinforcements for our expeditionary Forces on Volunteer help. Thousands of Volunteers had come forward in time of war and great national emergency, and they would do so again. He did not think we should ever lack Volunteers in times of danger, whether the danger arose on our home shores or distant shores. We wanted, however, to have these Volunteers with more military training than they received at the present time. For that reason he welcomed the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for the Abercromby Division had contended that the Volunteer unit, in his opinion, was an efficient substitute for the Regular unit and had given as an illustration of his argument a little anecdote of some occurrence in South Africa. He had told them of how a hairdresser with a gun held up a battery of Regular Artillery. He could quite conceive such a thing possible under certain circumstances. He would ask if the hon. Gentleman knew anything in history to justify that statement? Going back to the American Civil War was there anything there which would justify the statement that the Volunteer unit could be an efficient substitute for the Regular unit? He believed it was the deliberate opinion of all great military critics, that if either side in the American war could have put two, or even one, Army Corps in the field in the first six weeks it would have saved the country from the devastating war which lasted four years. He did not think, therefore, that there was any ground for that amazing assertion of his hon. friend. It might have been an intelligible argument if his hon. friend had made the comparison between a skeleton battery and a Volunteer battery, when these two came up for mobilisation for service. But the statement that a Volunteer battery or a Volunteer unit would be an efficient substitute for a Regular unit, he believed would not be accepted by any military authority in this country or anywhere else. It might be granted that soldiers who had the honour of serving in the Regular Army took extreme views as to the relative value of the Regular and Volunteer forces; but they must observe also that those who served in the Auxiliary Forces took an extreme view of the value of their force versus the Regular force. The hon. and gallant Gentleman made some other amazing statements and he thought they were very dangerous owing to the impressive way in which he made them, and the great art which he possessed of attracting his audience not only upon this subject but also upon others. It would perhaps be a very good thing if a little motto were put up over the War and Colonial Offices "Beware of Seely." He did not know which idea if pushed to its extreme limit was the more dangerous, the notion of the extreme value of the picked and more highly trained man, or that the Volunteer was an efficient substitute for the Regular. The picked-man notion might be true when applied to the Colonies and in countries where the difficulties of transport were very great; but when they came to deal with European forces, then he believed that greater individual efficiency would not win the day against vastly superior numbers; and when you had odds of four or five to one then the day would be won by numbers, by organisation and national characteristics. The question of the officers was the most important part of the whole problem. He did not think it would be an unkind thing if he were to say, by way of illustration, that when the Yeomanry went to South Africa, the first body of them were splendid both as to men and officers, but he thought everyone in a position qualified to judge would agree that of those who followed the men were very good material and would have been very good for their work with a little more training; but unfortunately the officers had not sufficient military training themselves to justify

Capt. Kincaid-Smith.

confidence being placed in them by those responsible for operations in the field. Their zeal was all right, but not their military training. His point was, that in a time of emergency, and in the event of a great war, that was the class which we wished to have to rely upon and to get rid of the difficulty. The right hon. Gentleman had now brought forward his scheme. But was this scheme going to attract the large number of officers—10,000—which would be required? Would the scheme attract that number of suitable men from the public schools and universities for the small sum of £20, to qualify as officers in the Reserves? If that sum was sufficient, of course the scheme would be a success; but he was sceptical whether this sum of money would attract hundreds and thousands of young men in this country, who were our best material, but who hitherto had done nothing to assist the Auxiliary Forces. If they went into the hunting field in the country, or to places of amusement in towns, they would find there some of our best material, but many of them, up to the present time, had done nothing to assist the Auxiliary Forces in any capacity whatsoever. He thought the War Office would find that a comparatively small number would be attracted by the sum of £20. The right hon. Gentleman, when he talked about the Reserve officers in the Continental forces of France and Germany, did not mention that the only way in which they were obtained was by some sort of compulsion, and he believed that we should not get the number of officers we required, with sufficient military training, unless we had some sort of compulsion all round. [Cries of "Oh."] Yes; he repeated it—a system of compulsory military training all round. There was a broad distinction between compulsory military training and compulsory military service. He knew that a number of hon. Gentlemen opposite would say that the compulsory military training of this great Army would be the first step towards conscription, but he would be as much opposed to such a system as anyone. Conscription would mean the taking of the youth of the country for a year, or more than a year, for the purpose of service; but military training as outlined in this territorial system would, he thought, meet with approval generally, and he certainly thought that it would be the only way in which their military problem could be ultimately solved. Last autumn he made a thousand calls in his Division, and he took the opportunity of asking the parents their views of this system of military training for their sons. He was perfectly astonished at the numbers who warmly approved of it when they understood the distinction between military training and military service. Parents did not object to their sons receiving military training such as two evenings a week, and a week in camp once a year, but they resented the idea of withdrawing them from civil life. Hon. Members had referred to democratic Colonial Governments and some of their institutions; but in Australia now they were talking about a scheme of training all round. Then, in the democratic United States, the illustrious head of that country was looking forward to the time when everybody there would have a short military training. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not think him presumptuous if he said to him "Leave the Regular Army alone." There was nothing wrong with the Regulars. He believed that, man for man, and unit for unit, they were equal, if not superior, to any force on the Continent. All that the Regulars wanted was to be left alone. To instance a small point: the alteration of mess dress of the artillery had caused an enormous amount of feeling. He believed that every officer in the artillery wished to retain his old mess dress, although he personally did not know whether the old mess dress was better than the new. The officers, however, were the people who had to wear it, and they all wished to retain the old form. Of course he could understand that there was some advantage if the new dress was cheaper; but it seemed that the old mess dress with a little more gold lace on it, although it cost more, lasted longer, and in the end was the cheaper article. If the right hon. Gentleman would have a small Committee of Artillery officers, and seek the advice of some tailors, he would find that they were quite justified in their request, and he might be able to see his way to allowing them to have what they desired. Since the war there had been an extraordinary and undisguisable feeling of dissatisfaction in the Army. He thought that one cause was the restlessness after a long campaign which made it difficult for both officers and men to settle down to the humdrum of barrack routine. Officers also did not hesitate to leave the Army if they saw any chance of a lucrative position in civil life, and he did not think any slight increase of pay would rectify that. But the chief cause of the dissatisfaction, of both officers and men, was that after many years service they frequently found they were abused in the Press and held up to ridicule and contempt on the platforms, and very often in the music halls. Until that sort of thing was ended there would be always this feeling of discontent. So far as the right hon. Gentleman was concerned he had succeeded in making friends with the Army, and his scheme would be approved of as a whole; but, if the territorial Army was to be a real asset to the country, the Volunteers and the Militia, as at present constituted, must be swept away.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.) said that during the last Parliament the conviction arose, and not by any means only on one side of the House, that the cost of the Army had unduly increased and that it unduly trenched upon the funds required for other purposes of national expenditure —upon the great sums, for instance, which they were forced to provide for the maintenance of the Navy. It was felt, too, that of the money spent on the Army an undue proportion was devoted to the Regular branch of the military forces, and that insufficient attention was devoted to the Volunteers, Yeomanry, and Militia. Those opinions were freely expressed in many debates in the House, and were very often the subject of discussion at public meetings, and he thought no one would deny that they met with a great deal of acceptance in the country at the general election. When the new Parliament came back last session the whole of the Government's supporters were, he thought, resolved that an earnest effort should be made to effect a real retrenchment in Army expenditure and a certain reduction in the numerical strength of the Regular Army. The situation which confronted his right hon. friend was not so satisfactory as that which several of his predecessors had enjoyed. The hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had reminded them that after all the money that had been spent on the Army, in spite of so many rapid changes, an indescribable feeling of restlessness prevaded officers and men. They knew in what scathing terms the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon summed up the military achievements of his predecessors in office. In these circumstances his right hon. friend devoted himself to his heavy task, and he would respectfully submit that the reductions which, in the course of his tenure of power, he had already achieved, were noteworthy and satisfactory. There was an actual reduction of over £2,000,000 upon the regular Army. There was a further reduction of £900,000 annually on the average loan expenditure of the preceding ten years, and in addition the right hon. Gentleman had succeeded in surmounting the automatic increase, aggregating in the last few years to nearly £1,100,000, which was an irresistible under current to all his efforts at retrenchment. The right hon. Member for Dover, of the tone of whose speech on the preceding day he did not in any way complain, seemed rather to underrate the financial achievement of his right hon. friend. He said that, after all, these automatic increase, were things which always occurred. No doubt that was the experience of the right hon. Gentleman, and that was one of the very points of which they had perpetually complained. It was not merely the ordinary proposals for Army Expenditure which were put before them every year that caused anxiety; it was the momentum that Army Estimates had been steadily acquiring. He ventured to say that if the various schemes put forward by his right hon. friend's two predecessors had attained to their full level, the cost would have been considerably above the Estimates which were presented this year. The scheme of Mr. Brodrick could not have been carried out, even with the strictest regard for economy, at a less charge than £31,000,000 a year, and would have reached that figure in the present year. The scheme of the right hon. Member for Croydon would have been only very little less. The economies which his right hon. friend was effecting were not yet complete. The reduction of eight battalions from the strength of the Regular Army was not wholly effective in the first year; a further reduction would be experienced on the Estimates of future years when the reduction operated through every stage in the soldier's career. He was quite aware that a good many people who followed military matters with a general, but superficial interest said that it was the duty of the Government to reduce the expenditure on the Army to the level at which it stood in 1896 and 1897. That, of course, was absolutely impossible. [" Why ? "] It was very easy to add expenditure to expenditure, but the process of recovering the funds which had been perhaps lightly and blithely voted was painful, and, in some cases insuperable obstacles were encountered. Let them take some of the items by which Army expenditures had been increased since 1896. There was, first, the increase of the pay of the soldier amounting to £1,500,000 a year. No one would propose that that should be taken off. He challenged any one, of any Party, to say that, having conceded our private soldiers those considerable advances in pay, it would be possible now to lower the standard rate of wage throughout the Army. Then there was the bounty given to the Militia by Mr. Brodrick, amounting to £140,000, for the purpose of raising the Militia to the level of 150,000 men, but which had no result of any sort of a satisfactory character. Of course, while the Militia remained in its present condition that was an absolutely irrecoverable item of expenditure. Then there was the £400,000 a year increase due to the filling up of the Reserve, an increase which he did not at all deplore, but which was automatic and could only be recovered through the slow operation of the Army system. There was an increase of pensions, partly due to the South African War and partly due to subsidiary causes. These were items which were not within the power of the War Minister to overtake, however desirous he might be to effect economies, and however courageous he might be in making reductions. Then, lastly, there was the interest on loans and borrowed money, which amounted to no less than £900,000 a year. Those were serious limitations and restrictions upon the work of his right hon. friend, and he thought the Committee would agree that, as he had begun to make the necessary reductions in the units of the Army, time and patience should be accorded him; and while the other process by which retrenchment might be effected, viz., the year-to-year practice of thrifty and frugal administration and careful scrutiny of accounts, was at work, the process of his right hon. friend would be permitted to mature. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover, who addressed them on the previous day, had said that what we required was a better Army at a cheaper price. It was a modest request, but he thought they would all agree with it. The only test to which military schemes should be subjected was the amount of war power yielded by the military machine in proportion to the money which was spent upon it; and that was the only test by which the Secretary for War would desire his scheme to be judged. What were the main principles of the scheme unfolded to them on Monday last? First, it was an earnest attempt to turn the voluntary system to its best advantage. In the second place, there was the principle of the organisation of our land forces in two lines—the field Army and the Home Army; or they might be called the Regular Army and the territorial Army, or people who liked high-sounding titles might call them the Imperial Army and the National Army. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover might take his choice—he believed he preferred the more luxuriant forms of expression. He thought they would agree that there was great simplification in the division of our land forces into these two main categories. It was with the Regular forces of the Crown that the problem to be solved presented the primary difficulty. It was an old problem. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had told them on the previous day that the needs of the British Army were peculiar, and that the problem was complicated. It was quite true that the Minister who was responsible for the British Army had to solve a problem which contained not only every perversity of fact but also every perplexity of human nature, with all the difficulties of mathematics added. There were two facts about the Regular forces of the Crown which made all comparison between the cost of our system and the cost of the military systems of foreign nations quite inapplicable. First of all, we proceeded on the voluntary system, so that we had to take our men when and where we could get them; and the second fact was the great foreign establishment which this country was forced to maintain. These two facts, which could not but be present to one set of critics or the other, were absolutely irremovable facts, and as long as they endured the symmetry of the military machine could never be wholly attained, and its cheapness could never bear comparison with the military organisation of other countries. He had observed in the debate yesterday a tendency to prowl around the Cardwellian system without the necessary courage to make an inroad upon it. The right hon. Member for Dover seemed to speak with some suspicion and doubt of the regular Cardwellian system as we had known it in this country, and his hon. and gallant friend the Member for the Abercromby Division had given notice that he would on a suitable occasion attempt to demolish it completely. The needs of the British Empire were diverse. There were the forces which we required at home, and there were the forces which we required to garrison foreign stations. The system which suited one force was less well adapted to the other. The conditions of service which would enable the whole Army to accumulate a very large reserve were not applicable to the maintenance of foreign garrisons abroad, where stability was required, where they must necessarily serve for a considerable time, where they must be matured and seasoned men, and where it was not worth while to take them out merely to be transported back again to this country. These conflicting needs had led numerous students of Army reform to propose a solution on the basis of a dual service, the two parts to be quite distinct. He quite admitted that for the purposes of either service such a distinction would be a great advantage; but when the needs of the country as a whole were considered, and the whole military problem was considered, the case for dove-tailing the foreign and home regular services together, for making the home battalions train the drafts for the foreign battalions, for enabling the foreign battalions to secrete the reserves which in time of war were to form upon the *cadres* of the home battalions —that dual principle, that reciprocal action presented such enormous economy in finance, realised such a high standard of battalions on mobilisation compared with anything that could be obtained under rival schemes, that, although the system had been so often changed, and although so many able men had cudgelled their brains to destroy it, yet it had stood all the knocking about to which it had been subjected, and those who had brought their arguments into collision with it had usually retired in weariness from the field. His right hon. friend preserved as the basis of the settlement of the problem of the Regular army the main principle of the Cardwellian system, by which he meant the training of men for battalions abroad in the ranks of the battalions at home. He was told that so long as that system was observed, there could be no further extensive economy in the British Army. He was not at all prepared to admit that. While recognising that a balance of battalions, the number of battalions at home equalling the number abroad, was the best means of arriving at the highest efficiency and economy, under the Cardwellian system, it was by no means proved that the equipoise must inevitably, and in all cases, be maintained. Such an equipoise did not in fact exist at the present moment; and although he was very glad to find himself again in agreement with the right hon. Gentleman below the gangway, that such an equipoise did not in fact exist, yet there were half a dozen devices, with the details of which he would not weary the Committee, by which a certain preponderance of the battalions necessary to be kept abroad might be met, without overthrowing the advantage of the principle of training recruits for service abroad in the ranks of the Regular battalions at home. He confessed that it was to him an additional advantage in the scheme of his right hon. friend that it did not close the door to any further movements in the direction of reducing the general strength of the Army if policy should appear to justify such a reduction. There was another important fact about the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, to which he would like to draw the attention of the Committee, viz., the supply of recruits required every year to maintain establishments and organisation. They were often told that they should begin considering what our Army should be by considering how great our needs might be; but he thought that it was much better to see what were our actual resources rather than attempt to measure potentialities which were in their very nature immeasurable. The governing consideration of Army policy was the annual quota of efficient good, healthy recruits of the proper standard who could be obtained from the country in any one year. That, he submitted, ought to be the starting point in any scheme of Army reform. The annual supply of recruits varied very much less from year to year than people would suppose. The supply varied to some extent inversely with the labour market; it also varied with the spirit of military adventure that filled the minds of the people. As long as they kept within the demand of 23,000 to 25,000 men a year a very considerable degree of economy pervaded the military system. Once they passed beyond that every kind of waste and inconvenience crept into the system, and the larger the demand for recruits the greater the wastage. The standards of health, age, and good character were very important in regard to the Foreign Service Army, but those standards could not be so rigidly enforced, or possibly they had to be relaxed, and the energies of recruiters were stimulated to procure men even if they went beyond the strict rules which had been laid down to govern the enlistment of men in the Army. General recruiting in this country was like a spring; so long as they were content with its normal flow they got clear water circulating through the whole of the military system; if, on the contrary, they began to pump, they brought up gravel, which, at every stage of the whole elaborate process, caused friction, waste to the public, and he ventured to say no good to the social system as a whole. Let them compare the scheme of the Secretary of State with the schemes of his predecessors, bearing these few observations in mind. He was informed that actuarial calculations of a very complicated character placed the average annual quota of recruits necessary to sustain Mr. Brodrick's Army scheme at 40,200 a year. The policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon had different terms of service and was based on the principle of the dual Army, which was stated by him in the House, in reply to a question by the present Prime Minister, to require 31,600 recruits a year. The present Secretary for War had effected a reduction in the Army of eight battalions, and he had also returned to the old compromise between the needs of the home Army and the needs of foreign service which was best expressed by the term, "seven years with the colours and five with the reserve." Thus he had reduced the annual demand on the recruiting supplies of the country to 22,000 men a year—a demand well within the normal limits of production. The greatly improved terms now given to the soldier, together with the diminished demand for recruits, should give the Secretary for War a higher selective power than his predecessors had possessed, and consequently there would be a gain of efficiency all through the elaborate circulations of the Army. If the establishments of the regiments were somewhat smaller, the proportion of effectives would be larger; and if the force looked smaller on paper it would really be stronger in the field when mobilised for war. As to the fourth point in this scheme—the expeditionary force—no one viewed with undue enthusiasm the preparations of a great army for immediate overseas employment, and such a provision, although necessary in the case of our Empire, was nevertheless not a provision which found its parallel among other modern States. But of course no one could be blind to the fact that we had a very serious and grave obligation upon us in regard to India, and it was our high duty to shield India from anything that could bring disturbance or disaster to the millions living there under the protection of the British Crown. It was that aspect of our military necessities which was the one real and grave contingency for which it was our duty to make effective provision. The dimensions of our expeditionary force were fixed by the dimensions of the Army plant necessary in this country to maintain in an efficient condition the large garrison we had to keep up abroad, because the one was governed by the other. If the troops for that purpose were at home it would be folly not to organise them to the highest possible efficiency for all the various purposes to which they might have to be put. If the numbers necessary to maintain the troops abroad could be reduced, then a reduction would be made in the size of the expeditionary force and the scheme of the Secretary for War would not lose in its harmony and efficiency. By the present scheme the efficiency of the expeditionary force would be greatly improved. In the first place, there was the organisation into divisions instead of into army corps. A divisional organisation was far more suited to an island Power conducting oversea operations. To begin with, troops were not embarked in army corps; and in the South African War it was not in army corps but in divisions that we were compelled by the hard logic of events to send troops to the front. In the recent war, too, the Japanese army was reinforced by the movement of successive divisions. In this respect he thought his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War might claim that he had adopted a more flexible and suitable organisation for the special difficulties our expeditionary force would have to meet. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had said that the strength of the expeditionary force was to be 150,000, and that was nearly the strength of the force sent out to South Africa under the old system by the end of March, 1900. But in what order did those troops go to South Africa; and at what immense expense and extraordinary exertion, and by what strange makeshifts was that great force despatched? The arrangements now being made, though possible only in the light of recent experience, implied provision and prevision for all these emergencies which had to be met in the early days of 1900. The right hon. Gentleman had asked whether this force was going to be of a less composite character than the first 150,000 troops which were dispatched to the seat of war in South Africa. No doubt the force would be of a less composite character, but there would be a proper place for every man and every man would be in the right place. Under the want of system that prevailed previously trained soldiers of long service were driving wagons and carts miles in the rear of the army, while raw recruits were sent to take their places in the fighting line. The new arrangements would reverse that. Trained and seasoned soldiers would at the beginning of the campaign be in the firing line, and all the ancillary services of the Army would be discharged by men of less experience. Now as to the fifth point in the scheme—what was to happen to the Militia? Very serious changes were contemplated. He would be the last not to recognise the past services of that branch of the land forces, and how nobly they came forward and volunteered almost to a man for service at the front or in the Mediterranean stations during the South African War. It was not in any depreciation of those services that the problem of the Militia had been approached. But tendencies were at work in our modern life which were far stronger than the wishes of individuals, and the whole tendency of modern military affairs had been to disintegrate the Militia. The officers had been drawn off to the new Imperial Yeomanry and many of the men had been attracted to the Volunteers, and the whole Militia service had been consistently bled by the Regular Army. It was not that the Militia had been starved by the authorities. Its history during the last ten years proved the contrary. Mr. Brodrick gave a large additional bounty which quite failed in its object either of raising the standard or increasing the numbers. The cost of the Militia had gradually increased as its numbers had diminished. In 1895–96 we got 112,000 men for £513,000. In 1905–06 we got 89,000 men for £750,000. In other words, nearly 20 per cent. fewer men cost nearly 50 per cent. more money, After a financial fact of that kind had been stated, it was hardly necessary to allude to the unequal quality and strength of Militia battalions, to the dreadful shortage of officers throughout the Militia, and to that system, which, he was afraid, was widely prevalent, by which a Militia recruit was able to serve in the same year many separate trainings in different parts of the country. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover admitted yesterday—and the admission counted for a good deal because he was a high authority on Army matters—that the Militia was an indefensible body in the condition into which it had got. What was the proposal of his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War, stated in its simplest terms, in regard to the Militia? All that belonged to the Volunteers, all the old county force or elements in the Militia, would fall back, under the shelter of the County Associations, into the Territorial Army, and the cost per man would be reduced by that, from the present cost of £22 per year to the cost of a man in the Territorial Army, which, he understood, was calculated, though necessarily the calculation was a rough one, at something like £8 10s. a year.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover) was understood to question these figures.

MR. CHURCHILL said he believed his figures were accurate, but in any case they were not material to his argument. All that belonged to the Volunteers would fall back on the National Army; all that belonged to the Line was to go forward, under terms which the Government believed would be acceptable, into the Line. He now drew the attention of the Committee to a serious gap in our military organisation, which would become wider owing to this treatment proposed for the Militia, by the Secretary of State and which must be filled. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon was never tired of declaiming against the enormous number of unfit and immature soldiers who were left behind after their battalions had gone out to the South African War. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover yesterday showed how large that surplus of men left behind and unfit to serve in the field would necessarily be when the field Army had gone abroad. Of course it was true that a great many of these men would be perfectly fit to go out and serve at the front a few months or a year later if the war lasted so long. The right hon. Gentleman had drawn attention to the great difficulty there was in dealing with this enormous mass of men who were left behind after their battalions had gone abroad when there were no definite *cadres* to whom they could be fixed. To that had to be added the surplus of the reservists who were not needed to fill the Regular battalions, and to that again had to be added the influx of men who came forward to join the colours under the harsh and strident exhortations of war, which had always been found to be unexpectedly large. Some provision must be made for dealing with these very considerable bodies of men who might be of the greatest possible value, but who otherwise would be left in the confusion which the men were left in when the Regular Army had gone to the South African War. That was the gap in our military system at present, and that gap was widened by the proposals of the Secretary of State in regard to the Militia because, if the Militia fell back to the Volunteer basis, there was no net spread, as the Militia was now spread, to catch for the Regular Army the valuable supply of something like 12,000 recruits a year which the Regular Army drew from the Militia. It was to meet this need, to fill this gap, that his right hon. friend had been drawn to his conclusions as to the third battalions, which were part training schools and part mobilisation centres. His hon. and gallant friend the Member for the Abercromby Division of Liverpool need have no alarm that the Government had any idea of embarking on a vast scheme of militarism with the aid of a professional Army. They were not battalions in the ordinary sense of the word. They were more than depots, because they were recruiting for themselves as well as recruiting for the Line with which they were associated. It was supposed that these battalions would, after a steady supply of 12,000 men a year had been maintained for the Regular Army, on mobilisation of their six months men yield between 500 and 600 men, and these, in addition to the surplus of reservists and the immature and unfit soldiers who would have been left behind when the field Army had gone, constituted formidable reservoirs of men, who would not be without military organisation, although admittedly not a very full organisation, and it was from these reservoirs of men that a continual stream of drafts could be sent to refresh the fighting units in the field. No one pretended that these third battalions could be created by a stroke of the pen. They had got to be administratively evolved, and it was a matter in which his right hon. friend was determined to proceed tentatively and gradually. The Militia battalions were quite ready to go abroad, but they insisted on going in their own units, and the advantages of sending men to the front to supply the original regular *cadres* instead of placing new and much less trained units alongside them in the fighting line were, he believed, so indisputable that they would not be denied by soldiers of accepted authority. That was, to his mind, one of the most important advantages that would be gained by the scheme of his right hon. friend. He was not going to enter into a dispute with his hon. and gallant friend the Member for the Abercromby Division as to the relative value of volunteer and professional soldiers, but he believed most sincerely that the alterations which were taking place in modern weapons continually increased the power of the citizen soldier in the defence of his own country and in fighting for a cause which he thoroughly understood and knew. The one inspiration which was to call to the service of the Crown these great numbers of citizen soldiers who were to fill the divisions of the home army must be the defence of the soil. He might be asked how was it possible that men could be summoned to defend their country if the Navy guaranteed them against all possible risk of invasion? He had great respect for the Blue Water School, but some of their statements, such as that not a dinghy load of men could be landed in this country——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Who said that?

MR. CHURCHILL: The late Secretary of State for War said that a distinguished naval officer had said so, and he gave currency to the statement, a currency which it would never have obtained if it had not been uttered by a Minister of the Crown. All he would say on those points was that some of the extreme statements of the Blue Water school required to be swallowed with a good deal of salt. After all, the foundation for our insular security was not only the Fleet, but the Fleet in conjunction with all the other peculiar circumstances which existed in this island. The Leader of the Opposition had pointed out in a speech which had never received sufficient attention from military students, that our security against serious raids depended not only on the Fleet, but on the considerable body of armed men which existed in this country whose resistance, on a very extensive scale, would make it necessary for an invader to bring with him such a considerable force that that force could not be landed on our shores without ample opportunity being afforded to prepare to meet it. It was quite clear that the presence of the proposed territorial Army in this country was the only thing that would give that strategic freedom to the Fleet which was absolutely indispensable to its proper use, and it was also the only thing which would enable the expeditionary force to be despatched to the seat of war. Therefore, the real duties and responsibilities which devolved upon that territorial Army were of such vital importance that it was indeed, an honour to all men who were called upon to take a share in that most necessary service. His right hon. friend had for the first time attempted to give a Regular war organisation to the Volunteer forces which remained at home. And his right hon. friend had made a discovery. Most people would have said that to increase Volunteer efficiency they must have longer annual periods of training and higher standards. It sounded almost a paradox to controvert that statement, yet he believed it was true that the framework into which the men of the territorial forces were to be fitted when war broke out, and the quality of the men who belonged to those forces, were more important than the actual period of the annual training, and that it would be a cardinal error in military policy to refuse good men just because they could not conform on some points to the exact conditions laid down in the regulations, or give full service in training camps. He was quite convinced that the application of that principle to our Volunteer forces would lead to a notable accession of strength to the whole of the forces composing our national Army. As to the county associations, he had always believed and urged that they could not fail to nourish and sustain the local forces, and that they would begin to feel that they had a real share in the administrative control of them, and that they were closely identified with their efficiency and discipline. The idea was a novel one and it would be, of course, applied with great caution. He welcomed, particularly, on behalf of the Secretary of State, the very proper and patriotic statement which was made by the right hon. Member for Dover yesterday, that if this Bill should pass he would use his personal exertions with his Yeomen by speech and example to make the new scheme a complete success. If that was the spirit in which this great question was approached by all Parties he was convinced that the Secretary of State for War would meet the Yeomanry and Volunteers in a similar spirit. The transitory clauses of the Bill would be applied gradually, and that would give plenty of time to consider all sorts of difficulties that might arise in particular circumstances. He had only attempted to make a raid, not an invasion on the time of the Committee, but as he had taken a very keen interest in those military matters for the past ten years, he wished to pay some tribute to the scheme of his right hon. friend and to point to the large, true, and permanent principles of military organisation which seemed to him to be embodied in it and to underlie it. His right hon. friend had produced a great spacious, glittering, co-ordinated military machinery, every part of which was interdependent; and, although no one supposed for a moment that it could be brought into immediate operation or that there was no room for modification in details, nevertheless, it was a scheme worthy of his capacious mind and tireless industry; and if the House was able eventually to allow it to issue under the seal of its authority future Parliaments would say without hesitation that the work done this session constituted, whether in regard to the Regular or Auxiliary Forces, the most serious and substantial advance towards an improvement of the military resources of the Crown that had been attempted or carried through since the great reforms of Mr. Cardwell.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he had not intended or desired to take any part in the debate that day, but had rather intended to defer anything that he had to say on the matter until the right hon. Gentleman had introduced his Bill. But he was sorry to say that his right hon. friend the late Secretary for War, who was to have spoken early that afternoon, was prevented from attending by illness, and he did not think it courteous to the Government to leave the speech of the hon. Gentleman (the Under-Secretary for the Colonies) without notice. The hon. Gentleman had made a most interesting and able speech which had the very great merit in his eyes that it dealt with the larger aspects of this great problem. It was almost inevitable that the hon. Gentleman should have dealt first with the subject of economy, for he had delivered a large number of speeches in the previous Parliament upon the iniquitous character and intolerable burden of the Army Estimates. Everybody thought—certainly he himself did—that anything which could reduce the great Army Estimates of the country without diminishing the efficiency of the forces of the Crown must be welcomed, not in the interest of a Party but of the community as a whole, either in peace or war. Certainly he had rather understood from the philippics of the hon. Gentleman when he was in a position of happy irresponsibility that he anticipated—he thought quite vainly—some enormous reduction due to some revolutionary change in the system. The hon. Gentleman spoke, as was fitting, in far more guarded terms now, and when it was remembered that the economies of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, the value of which he was the last person to minimise, nevertheless were due partly to the completion of the guns, partly to the reduction of *personnel*, and partly to the diminution in the number of horses and remounts, he was not sure that they had quite as much reason to congratulate themselves upon the magnitude of those economies as might, perhaps, have appeared from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman and certainly from the speech of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. The truth was that, with the improved organisation initiated by the late Government, and carried on by the present Government, some economies—indeed, some had been accomplished—but further economies, he hoped, might be accomplished. He did not believe it was possible to make the vast reductions in the Army Estimates which were the dream of some ardent reformers if they were to keep the Army at the level required by Imperial obligations. The Government were constantly taking credit to themselves for having abolished the system of loans. He believed they had made a great and profound mistake. It was true the system of loans might facilitate, though he did not think it had ever facilitated, indulgence by the Government in unnecessary expenditure; but the abolition of the system carried necessarily in its train the imposition of burdens on the country which really ought to go to capital expenditure, which must have the effect of preventing proper capital expenditure being undertaken. Luckily for the Army and for the country, the work of rehousing the troops had been largely carried out, and he believed the need for loans—not from the policy of the Government, but from the policy of their predecessors—was much smaller now than it had been in preceding years. He hoped they would not as a consequence conceive that capital expenditure was no longer required, or that the Government would not leave their successors any arrears to be made up; for their successors would be abused, although the true criminals would be those who were at this moment responsible for the financial arrangements of the country. The question of the reduction of *personnel* was intimately connected with the whole scheme of the Government. It must have been obvious to the Committee, both from the Speech of the Secretary of State for War and from the speech of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that while they had been told very clearly the magnitude of the expeditionary force which the Government hoped to be able to send abroad at a moment's notice when their reforms were carried through, they had not yet had anything in the nature of a reasoned statement of the needs of the Empire. The hon. Gentleman seemed to deride any investigation into the needs of the Empire, and had said that what they had to consider was the number of recruits they could annually obtain. It did not need as able an orator as the hon. Gentleman to make the self-evident proposition that they could not have a bigger voluntary army than the number of people of a proper standard who were prepared to serve in that army. No human being denied that the possibility of getting troops was a factor which no army organiser desired to forget, or was allowed to forget by the hard necessities of his position. Still, it might be that, while they could not get more troops than the recruiting market would allow them to obtain, it was only by an analysis of the needs of the Empire that they could determine whether they ought to go to the full extent that the recruiting market would allow them to go. He could not doubt that any reduction of the Regular Army would be a most fatal mistake for the country to indulge in. The hon. Gentleman, basing himself upon the investigations of the late Defence Committee, stated truly enough that the great military problem they had to face was the defence of India. The Estimates connected with the defence of India were subjected to anxious investigation before the late Government left office, and he was confident that the present Government were continuing those investigations, and had probably greatly advanced upon the stage at which that subject was left by their predecessors. But he greatly doubted whether any investigation would show that they were indulging in mere terms of militarism when they warned the Government that it would be a most dangerous step to diminish the number of Regular troops which they now had at their disposal. The danger was real and great, and he hoped that in any fit of imaginary economy but real wastefulness the Committee would not consent to a repetition of the step of last year. The hon. Member for the Abercromby Division gave fair warning yesterday that he approved of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme because it made it easier on some subsequent occasion to reduce the number of Regular units of the British Army. He did not see anything in the scheme which made it easier, but if it was made easier he hoped the Government would not attempt to take advantage of the opportunity. But, after all, their interest at the present time was fixed on two other points of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme, which really were novelties—the third *quasi*-battalion which he proposed to add to the two battalions of existing regiments, and the scheme which he had proposed for reorganising the Volunteers. They were all agreed, he thought, that the Militia force could not be left in its present condition. The observations made by the hon. Gentleman opposite who had just sat down were perfectly sound. The Militia had suffered on the one side from having a large number of men attracted from them to the Volunteer service, and on the other side from having all their best men and many of their best officers taken from their ranks and added to the Regular Army. It was impossible in these circumstances that the Militia should be otherwise than in a somewhat anæmic condition. Something ought to be done. Had the Government done the right thing? All would admit that they had taken a huge step. Was the step safe and secure? Ought it to be endorsed by the approval of this House and the country? They ought not to mince matters on this subject. They ought to admit, he thought the Government did admit, that they are going to abolish the Militia. There had been smoother phrases used. He thought the Secretary of State for War and the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down suggested that the part of the Militia which was akin to the Line was going to be formally used for the Line, and the part of the Militia which was akin to the Volunteers was going to turn its patriotic services to the Home Army. But disguise it as they might under felicitous phrases, the fact remained that if the scheme was carried out the Militia were no more. The Militia were the great traditional home defence force of the country. They had behind them a great history. They had not only helped to secure the inviolability of these shores, but, although only bound to serve at home, they had shed their blood on many a great battlefield. He looked with instinctive mistrust upon the total destruction of an instrument which had utility still in it, and which had borne a great and glorious part in the history of the country. Had he been in the right hon. Gentleman's place he would have tried all the ingenuity with which he or those who advised him were endowed to see whether he could not fit this historic force to carry out the purposes required by the modern needs of a modern army. He thought the right hon. Gentleman's motive was that he could not get drafts out of the existing Militia. He suspected that if the Militia had consented not merely to serve abroad in units, but to supply drafts to the Regular Army, he would have been content to reform them and to retain them as an integral part of our military system. He was aware that the Militia had an objection to sending drafts. He could not help thinking that might have been, at all events, partially overcome by some arrangement between the right hon. Gentleman and those who had a right to speak for the Militia force. He could not help thinking also that he had too hastily rejected that integral part of the Cardwell scheme which consisted in supplying drafts by means of large and efficient depots. He did not know what reason he had. Surely he might have kept the Militia as a channel through which an immense number of recruits went to the Regular Army and served as the necessary drafts, and partly as separate units which could be used as units in time of war. He admitted that the existing Militia regiments, depleted of their best officers, having lost their best non-commissioned officers and men, could not be regarded as anything like equal to the best European troops. Even the hon. Member for the Abercromby Division, who took so sanguine a view of the merits of half-trained troops and thought that they could be made to serve on equal terms with the Regular Army in the firing line, would admit that the Militia, depleted and bled as they were, could not be expected to perform that function. He was sure it would be as possible to give the proportion of Regular officers to the Militia as was proposed to give to these new battalions, and if the Government did that, and improved their general system, they would serve the purpose and be invaluable for our special needs. What happened when the country went to war? They strained the resources which the Regular Army put at their disposal almost to the breaking point. They sent to the front from the fortresses in the Mediterranean, and from this country, every Regular battalion they could find, and they made up the deficiency so created in the fortresses by Militia battalions, and they were capable of making up that deficiency. They could do it thoroughly well, but the new battalions—their third battalions—could not. From their very constitution they were tied to the soil. The right hon. Gentleman said they were not to serve abroad. They were not even to be allowed to volunteer to go abroad, because, if they did, the whole machinery for supplying drafts for the troops abroad would, from the very nature of the case, be smashed and destroyed. Therefore, if the right hon. Gentleman's plan was carried out, there was nothing to use for the Mediterranean fortresses, or for the lines of communication, as in the South African War. They could not use the English or Scottish Militia regiments because they had been wholly destroyed. The need found in South Africa for the Militia battalions and the use to which they were put would be repeated and with fresh emphasis if we had to defend India. Let them assume that the Militia battalions were quite incapable of meeting on equal terms European forces in the Passes of Afghanistan, yet they would be quite capable of taking the place of the Indian troops sent to the front. Everybody would agree that it would be quite impossible to remove the white troops from India altogether, but the white troops left there need not be Regular troops—Militia troops could do the work equally as well. If they deprived themselves of the Militia they would deprive themselves of what was a stand-by of incalculable value in such a crisis as arose in the South African War, and such as would have to be faced if called upon to defend India. He confessed he did not see that the right hon. Gentleman had given any adequate reason for a revolution which must have hurt his historic sense of the British Army, and which carried with it the great and inevitable defect that he could not use the Volunteers to fill up the drafts. The work which he had sketched out for the Militia was a duty which could not be done by any other Volunteer or semi-Volunteer force. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would reflect upon this difficulty and reply to it if he had anything in his mind to meet it. At this stage he would say no more about the Militia but would turn to the Volunteers. The right hon. Gentleman having destroyed the Militia, threatened to destroy the Volunteers. On that point the right hon. Gentleman spoke with much greater authority than he could. The Volunteer force of which he dreamt, if he could get it, was undoubtedly a far better Volunteer force than we had at present. But whether the right hon. Gentleman had made the terms too cast iron, to rigid, too difficult, of accomplishment, carrying with them too great a burden, was a point upon which he had no title to give an opinion. There was a large number of Gentlemen there in close touch with Volunteer feeling and he would leave them to discuss it. But was he wrong in saying that in the course of a three days debate they had seen a perceptible weakening in the heroic line the right hon. Gentleman took upon the first night? Certainly everybody went away from the first night's debate with the understanding that every Volunteer was to bind himself for four years, and to give a certain amount of fixed time each year, irrespective of the calls of his own business, profession or trade. He was not only bound for four years to these onerous obligations, but there was a heavy penalty upon him if he broke his engagement. The right hon. Gentleman now indicated that although there was a penalty of £5 to be enforced by some process or other, it was not to be enforced very often. Any excuse almost would be accepted as a ground for a man's relieving himself of this duty. He believed the right hon. Gentleman was right. He was not sure that this absolute obligation of going out in a particular week in the year would not press extremely hard upon some of the people they most desired to take part in Volunteer training. He quite agreed that to ask them to go out for a week or a fortnight's training was not too much—probably not enough. But if a man's business required him to be at home in a particular week, and that particular week was the week he was to go out to camp, he might say, "I am quite willing to give some time to my country, but this particular week is a time I cannot give without injury to myself and my family." He feared the right hon. Gentleman might find that he thus excluded not the idle or the lazy but some of the very best people whose services would be lost by this somewhat difficult system. There was another point. Probably this plan did not contemplate the ordinary time of peace, which he trusted would outlast our time, but contemplated a time of war. When war broke out the Volunteers, as he understood, were to be embodied for six months. Was that embodiment to be obligatory upon the breaking out of war, or only if the Government of the day thought the war was likely to be a serious one? Was there to be a period for decision or indecision? If it was to be rigid, if there was to be no choice, and if the Volunteers were to be sent out to camp for six months whenever we were at war with any European Power, then even the smallest difficulty would inevitably disorganise the whole of the industries of the country. 300,000 men of the class to which the Volunteers belonged could not be brought and put into camp for six months without causing enormous inconvenience in almost every branch of the national industries. If it was to be rigid it would be a great deterrent to unnecessary war. So painful would the process of going to war be that we never should go to war. He thought if the Volunteers were called out six months before war was threatened it might have a deterrent effect. But war in this country was not accepted lightly by any Government or any Party, and, as they were not talking controversially then, he thought that would be admitted by every gentleman present. It was a contingency which no Government, thinking of its own interests, would ever indulge in except under the most pressing and irresistible necessity. Of course they made mistakes, but no Government would do it with a light heart. Before war was declared the war spirit in the country always rose, and by the time war was declared the feeling was at fever heat, and it was only after that that the right hon. Gentleman proposed to apply, as a cooling draught this sedative measure of taking out these 300,000 Volunteers. That was one alternative. But there was the other alternative, which was not that the Volunteers should be called out whenever we were at war, but when the Government thought the possibility of war was so serious or the possibility of invasion so great, that it required this immense national effort. If this latter was to be the idea of the Government they would simply have a repetition of what Lord Randolph Churchill pictured, in a brilliant speech in that House, with regard to the decision or indecision of a Cabinet as to the blowing up of the Channel Tunnel. The Cabinet, anxious to prevent going to war, would wait and say: "Shall we call out the Volunteers?" Then they would discuss the *pros* and *cons*, and it would be so unpopular or so inconvenient to call out the Volunteers that it might be they would hesitate, and hesitate to such an extent that before the six months training was given many months more than six might have elapsed and they would find this territorial Army not the highly-trained force contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman, but in its early and incomplete stage, and it would hardly be equal to bearing the brunt of a collision with the enemy. The right hon. Gentleman was very pleased with that part of his scheme which divided the Volunteers into fourteen divisions, all supplied with their proper quota of cavalry artillery, and subsidiary military services, and he thougnt it was a very neat plan. He rather liked it, it was attractive. But would it not oblige them to throw upon the localities the necessity of providing Volunteers, not of the kind they wanted, but of the kind which their Procrustean divisional system imposed upon them? They grouped together four or five counties into a divisional area. Those localities would have to provide not merely a certain amount of infantry, but a fixed amount of cavalry and of artillery, whether they liked it or not. Also, though of this he was not quite sure, a certain amount of subsidiary services, army transport, and so forth. That would involve an interference by the War Office with the natural and normal constitution of the Volunteers which he thought would cause friction, and he was not at all sure that it was going to give them anything for which it was worth while to incur friction. Mr. Brodrick's scheme of army corps was much derided, most unjustly, as being beautiful on paper but difficult to carry out in practice, and, if carried out in practice, more—as in the case of ambitious architectural plans—pleasing to the military eye than as serving the real needs of war. Well, were not these elaborate fourteen divisions, each supplied with cavalry and artillery, a somewhat picturesque and rather useless organisation? He did not wish to criticise them too severely from that aspect, however; his serious criticism was from another point of view. The organisation of separate divisions with artillery implied that they believed in Volunteer artillery. But was there a single soldier who did?

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said that to deny the efficiency of Volunteer artillery was to cut ourselves off from all help from the Colonial artillery.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said his knowledge of the working of the Colonial system and of the efficiency of their artillery was not sufficient to enable him to deal with the perfectly relevant and fair interruption of the hon. Gentleman. He must leave that to more competent persons than himself. But of this he was quite sure, that every military authority whom he had ever had the opportunity or the duty of consulting was of opinion that the one thing which they could not improvise was artillery. No cross-examination, no pressure, would squeeze out of them any other opinion. And he was forced by that absolutely unanimous view, not to say that Volunteer artillery was useless, but that if they wanted to make the best use of their Volunteer infantry and cavalry they must add to their Volunteer artillery, artillery which was not volunteer. In other words, in addition to the artillery which was required for their Regular Army they must have other artillery—he did not say that it need be in very great quantities—to reinforce the Volunteer infantry and cavalry which the country was perfectly capable of supplying. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had told them that the new Volunteer organisation, the territorial Army, was to be called together to defend the coasts of these islands.

MR. CHURCHILL: The soil.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, they could not get to the soil without first landing on the coast; he begged the hon. Gentleman's pardon; he would take his phrase if he preferred it. Having said that, the hon. Gentleman made a small excursion upon the Blue Water school, their exaggerations in the past, and the modifications which might be introduced into the naval view. He did not dissent at all from the representation which the hon. Gentleman had given of his views with regard to the absolute necessity of maintaining a force in this country, whatever the object might be. The real use of a force in this country was to compel the invader to invade with so large a body of troops that practically the process of invasion was impossible as a military operation. In order to attain that end undoubtedly troops were required; he thought some Regular troops should always be in the country. He did not deny that the Volunteers, in order to perform that duty properly, must be better organised than they were now. His criticism upon the elaborate and rather onerous organisation proposed by the right hon. Gentleman must not be taken as meaning that he was satisfied with the volunteer system as it was, for he was not. When he was, as a member of the Defence Committee, looking into the question of a raid on Newcastle-on-Tyne, he thought that, as far as that military operation was concerned, undoubtedly there should be some much more careful and elaborate reorganisation of the forces we had at our disposal to meet it. But what he wanted to point out now as that there was a discrepancy, as it seemed to him, between the thesis of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down and the original contention of the Secretary for War. The hon. Gentleman had told them that the Territorial

Army was to defend the soil of this country. If he understood the right hon. Gentleman, he looked to the Territorial Army to supply not only drafts, but units for service abroad. Of course it was not to be a compulsory provision of drafts and units; but the object in making the proposed immense change in the Volunteers was not that the soil of this country should be better defended, but that the country should be better provided with means for carrying on wars in distant parts of the Empire. Nobody could guess that from anything that fell from the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. Surely the Secretary of State, and not the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, was right in that matter. If all they had got to do was to defend the shores of these islands, he did believe some reorganisation of the Volunteers was necessary, but he did not believe the revolutionary proposals of the Government were necessary. They were only necessary and justifiable if they were going to rely on the Volunteers to do that for which they had hitherto, in the main, though not wholly, relied on their Militia. Therefore, if they abolished their Militia, something of the sort proposed by the Secretary of State might be necessary. But let it be observed, it was not nearly as good for the purpose on which he dwelt earlier, because they could not ask them to go abroad to the foreign or Mediterranean garrisons or to India. They were not fit to do it until they had gone through the six months training which preceded the outbreak of war, although during that very six months it might be most convenient to move their Regular troops from the Mediterranean garrisons. He asked the Government again, therefore, whether they had sufficiently considered the difficulty that would result from this revolutionary change in the traditional system. They abolished the old historic force which could carry out some great and necessary duties, and substituted for it, not a Volunteer force, but the possibilty of a Volunteer force, which, with all its merits—and if organised on the system of the right hon. Gentleman they would be very great—would not be able to fulfil the exact duties which had been so admirably accomplished by the Militia in the past, and which a reformed Militia, supplied with Regular officers, would be able to fulfil even more efficiently. With regard to the scheme of third battalions they might call them battalions if they liked, but really they were a sort of hybrid mixture—something between a big depot and a rear battalion. That hybrid construction was not, and could not be, capable of fulfilling the duties which they threw upon the units which the Militia now supplied. When the Government came to consider that, he thought they would perhaps be somewhat inclined towards the policy which he confessed he personally had always favoured, which was that of seeing if they could not, by reforming the Militia, give that power of expansion to the British Army which reformers of all schools admitted to be necessary, but which, he admitted, no reformer had yet happily and thoroughly accomplished.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington) thought they might congratulate themselves upon the tone which had prevailed in the debate. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite was admirable in its attitude, because perfectly fair in its criticisms. He put his points in such a fashion as showed that he was really deeply conscious of the difficulties [Mr. BALFOUR: Hear, hear.] and only anxious to co-operate in the matter. For his part, they were deeply conscious of the difficulties with which they had to cope; and when points arose, as indicated, they would consider most carefully whether there were ways which might get them out of the difficulties with which they were confronted. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of the Militia question. Some months ago he confessed that he studied the question very much in the manner the right hon. Gentleman had disclosed. He, too, thought that it would be possible to reform the Militia, and so to alter their character as to make them fulfil the double function of at once finding drafts for the Army and at the same time of preserving that independence in their *cadres* which would have enabled them to be used for the purpose to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. But he came to see that the two functions were inconsistent. He found that soldiers were resolutely insisting that the primary function of the Militia was to subserve the Line, to provide 12,000 recruits, and in war it would be essential that the Militia should be available for the general purpose of drafts for the infantry line. On the other hand, he found the Militia declaring that it was impossible for them to keep their efficiency if subjected to that process; and when he looked at the way they had fallen off under the existing system he was convinced that the problem was an insoluble one on the lines indicated by the right hon. Gentleman. Up to 1902 there existed the Militia reserve, and it was available for drafts to the Regular Army in time of war. But the Government of the day had become convinced that it was fatal to the existence of the Militia. The battalions were depleted, and it was impossible for them to discharge their duties as units with anything approaching to efficiency. Taking into account that the Militia had to find 12,000 recruits every year he came to the conclusion that, if they loaded their force with recruits at the age of seventeen for the sake of the Line, the Militia battalions of which the right hon. Gentleman had spoken were battalions in a condition of the utmost inefficiency, more than appeared to be the case from their depleted numbers. The recruits were not of the age that they could send abroad. They did not send troops to India under the age of eighteen, nor to the Colonies under the age of twenty. The function of the Militia, therefore, to find recruits was one that destroyed it for the purpose of sending battalions in time of war to relieve the effective Line battalions and of doing garrison duties in stations away from the area of war. They had provided sufficiently in what they had done for that contingency. In the first place, they had left the Irish Militia liable for service abroad. They would still form units which they proposed to consolidate and bring up to strength, and they would be available in the same way as the old Militia. Their terms of enlistment would make them liable for service abroad; and, in the second place, for the surplus of the expeditionary force they had five battalions of the Line which were available for that purpose. In the third place, he did not agree with the right hon. Gentleman that it was out of the question, if necessary, that the third battalions should supply divisional battalions which should go abroad on the outbreak of a great war. The troops that came to the depots belonging to the battalion would find them too small to contain them in time of war, consisting as they would of all recruits coming in under the war fever; and there would be a number of divisional battalions capable of being used for garrison duty, and perhaps of completing the training of drafts, battalions of very great size and available for that purpose. They had, therefore, three sets of provisions made for the purpose of meeting the problem which the right hon. Gentleman had spoken of as being very important—namely, the taking the place of the garrison battalions going to the theatre of war. It was impossible until they had had experience of the system to say how it would work. But in the South African War large battalions were raised capable of sending units abroad, capable at least of doing garrison duty and of completing the training of men in them there. That was a point which had not been overlooked, and he had given great attention to it. Whether it was better or worse than the existing Militia system he did not know. Great difficulties arose from the depleted state of the Militia regiments, and that state had been getting much worse, for the Militia system was being killed by the Volunteers on the one side and by the Regulars on the other. Therefore they came to the deliberate conclusion that it would be better to reform the Militia. The matter had been under very careful consideration for months, and from the latest divergence of view he thought that the plan which he laid before the House was the best solution of an extraordinarily difficult problem. Naturally one felt a sentimental regret at parting with the Militia in its present shape with all its traditions, but it could not be overlooked that the Militia was getting more and more away from its original form and was gradually approaching a condition of impotence. The right hon. Member for Dover had also spoken of the Volunteers and the Volunteer artillery. The Volunteer artillery was not a new question. The Volunteer garrison artillery was not only a thing familiar to them for a long time, but it was part of the right hon. Gentleman's own war organisation and always would be a part of it. The garrison Volunteer artillery took the place of the Regular garrison artillery when the latter went out for war. No doubt it had a different kind of gun, but not more difficult to use than the field gun. The handling of heavy ordnance used in the garrison and naval fortresses involved great skill and capacity; but why should the House assume this *non possumus* attitude about the Volunteer artillery? He could only tell hon. Members that having come largely into contact with Volunteers in the last six months, there was no point on which they were more keen than to be allowed to try to make themselves into Volunteer field artillery. So keen were they and so ready to put their backs into the business that he thought they would act wrongfully were they to deny them the opportunity.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he was anxious not to be misunderstood. He did not discourage nor desire to discourage the Volunteer officers. On the contrary, he desired to encourage them; but when they had got their division at its proper amount of artillery and Volunteers they had not a thoroughly effective force, and they must stiffen it up with Regular artillery as well.

Mr. HALDANE said he did not assume that the Volunteer field artillery would turn out to be an effective force in the sense that Regular artillery was effective, but he thought that the experiment was worth making in order to procure a great reservoir of trained artillerymen to help in a great emergency. The force might become better than experts seemed to expect. They had after the divisions had gone out an enormous number of field guns of the most modern type for training, so that there would not be really a case of improvisation. If they had a number of highly trained men it did not take them so long to train in the use of the field guns with which their officers had been trained in the artillery training schools and which would be there in case of necessity. As to the question of the artillery there was more superstition than about anything except theology. He was quite aware that the man who laid and served the guns must be highly trained, and that the drivers must be men of a considerable amount of training and of a still greater amount of nerve. But the people who volunteered for field artillery work were of a class whose intelligence was rarely got in the ordinary ranks of the Army—the very pick of the Volunteers, men whose pride it would be to show that they were quite equal to Regulars. All he asked was that a trial should be given to the experiment. It would be a fine thing that the new second line should have a chance of being trained in all arms. At any rate, they would be the better for organising the proposed force.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) asked whether the guns would be used only for training purposes or whether they would have to fight superior modern guns.

Mr. HALDANE said he should hope the contingency of Volunteer artillerymen having to fight would not arise; but if they had, these guns, turned into quick-firers, would be excellent weapons, though perhaps 1,000 yards shorter in range than modern field artillery. But there was a reserve of the most modern kind of gun in the country, which would not be used for the training batteries, but which, with very little additional training, these Volunteer artillerists could use. The questions of the right hon. Gentleman as to notice to leave the Volunteers and as to embodiment put him in a dilemma; because his best answer would be to read the terms of a document in his box; but he must keep that till Monday. He could only say that they had worked out the matter with care. As to the decrease of horses, that was due to the abolition of three field artillery depots, and to the discovery that one mounted infantry school supplied all that they wanted for the necessaries which the General Staff had indicated. They had not reduced three batteries; they had depots, not batteries. As to the unsuitablity of the old depots for the new third battalions, the whole of the 500 or 600 men on the roll would not be trained at once. Normally there would be 150 recruits at the depot at a time. There would certainly have to be an organisation at the War Office for the Home Army. On the whole, he thought they might congratulate themselves on the way in which this discussion had been carried on. There had been an obvious desire to find a solution to a very difficult and thorny problem. He could only say for himself that he would be satisfied to contribute in some degree to that solution. But it was a matter which only time and experience could determine, and that was one of the things that made them especially anxious that the disposition to keep this thing out of unecessary controversy should be maintained.

*Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) said the question raised by the new proposals of the Government with regard to the Army and the Auxiliary Forces had been under the consideration of the Members of the Party on this side of the House to which he belonged. It would be admitted that they involved issues of very serious import to the working classes of the country. The creation of an Army—for that was what it practically amounted to—of over 500,000 trained men, taking the three forces together, could not be regarded as a light matter, especially when they remembered what the proposals involved. There were one or two points with respect to which he would like to have replies from the Secretary of State for War. The right hon. Gentleman had not dealt with any one of them, and therefore he would be content to wait until Monday, when he hoped to hear a fuller explanation. One of the points to which he referred was the position of workmen who had joined the Volunteers. At the present time it was often found difficult, especially in the case of skilled artisans, to obtain the necessary leave to attend drills, but if a certain number of drills were to be compulsory each year in addition to a week or a fortnight in camp or in depot that would very much increase the difficulty of artisans enlisting in the Volunteer force. He knew that the county military associations were expected in some way or another to negotiate with employers so as to overcome this difficulty. Might he say that the leaders of the working classes would resent most strenuously any attempt on the part of these county associations, which would be mostly military organisations, to come between them and their relations with employers. [Cries of "Oh!"] Hon. Members might murmur, but they would find out the truth of it. The great trade organisations were jealous of outside interference, and rightly so. They made their own arrangements between employers and themselves and they would strongly resent any outside authority interfering as to the relationship between them and the employers. A serious point which had been referred to by the right hon. Gentleman had reference to the mobilisation for a period of six months on the outbreak of war. At the end of the first month, as he understood, the Volunteer, so-called, was to be invited to enlist for service abroad. That was another way of saying that those called would be expected to enlist for service abroad. One of the reasons that he objected to the Territorial Army was because it was not an honest facing of the situation. These men were to be trained ostensibly for home defence, but, as he understood the scheme, they were intended in the main to supply drafts for the Army abroad in time of war. If that were so, it would be better to make that clear from the outset. One of the difficulties in the way of carrying out the proposals would be that men who had no objection to undergoing drill as Volunteers to train and equip them for the defence of the country against an invader would not desire to be placed in a position where they would be practically compelled to serve abroad in the event of their services being required when war broke out. That was a very serious blot on the proposals of the War Office. One of the other functions that the county military associations had to perform was to look after the rights and interests of time-expired men and reservists. In that there was the dangerous tendency of giving preferential treatment to men who had served in the Army. If the proposed scheme became law that tendency would be very largely increased. The whole tendency was towards creating the impression that the man who did not become a soldier was to be a marked man and receive less fair treatment in seeking employment than the man who did become a soldier. ["No."] The Labour Members protested against that. Let them not punish a man who desired to serve his country at home and honestly work in helping to create wealth. As to the proposals for training officers, he wished to point out that the official positions in the Army were reserved for the sons of the rich and well-to-do. The ordinary workman who joined the Army had practically no chance of rising into official rank. The cost of the officers' mess made it practically impossible for a man who had not a father with a long purse behind him to become an officer and live up to his position. Special arrangements were to be made for the training of officers from amongst the ranks of the young men attending the universities and great public schools. But it was an open secret that the sons of the working classes did not go to universities or great public schools. If they did so it was with a desire to learn, and they were so engrossed in their studies that they had not time to prepare to be soldiers. Whatever the intention might be the proposals would result in the training of officers from the ranks of the rich and well-to-do to the practical exclusion of the capable sons of the working classes.

MR. HALDANE said that there was a reference to the point raised by the hon. Member in the Report of the Committee. That Committee recommended that a limited number of warrant officers and non-commissioned officers who had served a certain period with the colours and were still in the prime of life should be placed on the list for commissions.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE said that these men must have served with the colours before having the opportunity of becoming officers, but his point was that the universities and the big public schools men who had not served with the colours were to be trained as officers. That was preferential treatment. It was part of the whole system with which they were familiar, that the working classes were to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water not only in the industrial sphere but in the military and civil service spheres. Almost every avenue through which the sons of the working classes could rise into higher positions was being closed against them, unless they had a university training. Appointments which a few years ago were given to workmen because they had practical experience were barred against them. A university education was now regarded as a *sina qua non* and practical experience was regarded as of little or no value. The Labour representatives viewed that position with considerable apprehension. If the universities and public schools were to be used as seed-plots on which to raise officers for the Army, that was but a short step to the use of the public elementary schools in the same way to train common soldiers for the Army. It had been said that if this scheme failed the position would be no worse than at the present time. He did not hold that opinion. He was inclined to agree with *The Times*, which he did not often do, that the scheme could not succeed without the element of compulsion. They knew that for several years past many able and distinguished men, headed by Lord Roberts, had been advocating a thinly-veiled scheme of conscription as the only solution of the difficulties connected with defence. The proposal of the Secretary for War he regarded as the framework on which such a scheme would be built if the new plan failed. The next short and easy step would be some form of compulsory military service. [Cries of "No, no."] Every hon. Member was entitled to his own opinion on these points; but for his part he should resist with all his power any attempt to impose compulsory military service on the people of this country. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had said that no Government would enter into war with a light heart. The experience of the last ten years did not bear that out. They were proposing to create a great military force ostensibly for the defence of this country and its possessions abroad; but in the hands of some unscrupulous statesman the machines would be there for waging war on slight provocation, as war was waged in the Transvaal within the last few years. [Cries of "No, no."] He hoped that hon. Gentlemen were not going to say now that they believed there was the slightest justification for going to war with the Transvaal. [Cries of dissent, and "Hear, hear!"] Well, he was sorry for their intelligence. During the war fever there might have been excuses for unthinking people to be of that opinion, but nowadays, when they were able to look back calmly on the alleged facts, it was difficult to believe that anyone could justify that war. However, his point was that the creation of the proposed great Army was a danger to the cause of the people. At the forthcoming Hague Conference the question of the reduction of armaments was to be brought up, and was the representative of this country to go to that Conference with a brand new scheme for increasing its military forces? That would not be an encouragement to other countries to reduce their armaments by sea and land. Therefore his personal feeling was one of strong suspicion that by the proposed scheme they were strengthening the military spirit of the country and thereby increasing the risk of future wars and making social reforms more difficult.

*MR. MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth) said he had listened with great attention to the many excellent speeches this afternoon, and he should like to offer to the Under-Secretary for the Colonies his congratulations on his speech which was delivered with the same fluency, the same ingenuity, and the same absolute unsoundness of argument for which his speeches were invariably distinguished. He would only take one instance. The hon. Member stated that the number of recruits annually available for the British Army of a good class, *i.e.*, well-grown, healthy young men, was about 23,000 to 25,000, and that the principle on which we must proceed in recruiting was to make up our minds that this was the fixed available supply by which we must abide instead of considering the requirements of the Army and endeavouring to obtain that supply. He begged leave to differ entirely with the hon. Member, and he thought that he could prove that this argument was radically unsound. The supply of recruits was not fixed, but depended upon the inducements offered to recruits to join the different branches of the service. Would anyone in this House tell him that if the War Office offered £1 per day they could not get all the recruits they wished for? *Per contra*, if the Secretary for War would allow him to say so, the conditions offered under the new scheme might very much reduce the number of recruits who now came forward. He wished to repeat that the supply depended upon the inducement offered. The hon. Gentleman had gone on to illustrate his argument with a beautiful picture of a crystal fountain of pure water which bubbled out of the ground, representing the supply of healthy, well-grown young men available as recruits and begged them to draw on this supply as it came from the earth in a natural condition and not to apply a pump which would soil the purity and produce an increased flow, but of muddy water. Now this would be true if the whole supply of healthy, well-grown young men who every year arrived at the required age were to pass into the Army. But that was not true. By far the greater number passed at once into industrial life and only a small proportion came into the Army as recruits. Therefore, instead of accepting the hon. Member's illustration of bubbling spring, he would say rather the true illustration would be this. In the neighbourhood of Salisbury Plain, a district not altogether unknown to the military authorities, there were beautifully clear rivers from which a certain quantity of water was withdrawn at given points to irrigate the water meadows. The amount of water so withdrawn was regulated by the requirements of those water meadows, and if the existing supply was insufficient it could always be increased by some additional expense which would speedily bring all the water required to the water meadow requiring it. So also with recruits. Such were the arguments of the hon. Member. That was, however, only one illustration in regard to the working of the scheme. He wished at once to say with regard to the scheme generally that he entirely agreed with a great deal of what the Secretary for War wished to obtain, and the way in which he wished to obtain it. For instance, with regard to his plan of decentralisation, he approved of the idea that, so far as possible, the person responsible for spending the money should spend it in his own way. It was absurd that in former days there had to be a long correspondence in regard to some small requirement for a regiment, and he had always thought that it was desirable that the commanding officer of a regiment should be left to spend the money devoted to it as he thought desirable. If he spent the money badly, say in a cavalry regiment, his regiment would be inspected, and he would be "dropped on." He knew what that kind of correspondence meant, and remembered the old story in respect to forage for a particular horse. In the Crimean War, red tape was rampant, and it was reported that the officer commanding at Tomski Bridge applied for forage for his horse. This application passed through so many hands that three weeks elapsed before a reply authorising the issue of forage was received. On sending it to the quartermaster, the officer was informed that a new Army order which had come out since the application was first made rendered it impossible for him to comply with the requisition. The officer was less annoyed at this refusal than might have been expected as the horse had meanwhile died. He was glad to see that the Secretary for War recognised that the commanding officer of the unit should have the control of the money which was to be spent in maintaining that unit. What he had to say in connection with the scheme was that although it was excellent in some respects it was not entirely new and that the system which it was proposed to establish had been in force before the Secretary for War came into office, and he wished to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on being above availing himself of the good things which were left behind them by his predecessors. As a whole the scheme was a very attractive one. It was a tremendous scheme for a national Army, a territorial Army under which the people were to come out to defend their own country. He asked himself, however, whether it was not a policy of perfection? Would it succeed and could they under it get an Army which would be sufficiently large and efficient to defend the country in the event of a great war? He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that in the Army they should get rid of "show" servants, but if they got rid of them it migh make the conditions of service unattractive, and they might find a difficulty in getting servants at all. As to the fact that the Militia had, as the right hon. Gentleman said, no cavalry, he would be inclined to say that of course that was so, as no infantry battalion had any cavalry. Infantry battalions were dependent on a different branch of the service, viz., cavalry; the Militia was dependent on a different branch of the service, viz., Yeomanry. As to the latter force, it was a matter in which he had a special interest. What were the conditions of recruiting in the Yeomanry, and under this scheme how were recruits to be obtained? How had they been obtained in the past? It was due partly to the high rate of pay, 5s. 6d. a day, and in a great degree to the influence of the officers. By this scheme both those sources of inducement would be removed. No doubt the pay of 5s. 6d. a day sounded a great deal, but it must be remembered that the members of the Yeomanry were usually farmers, blacksmiths, shopkeepers and others of that class, and if they went out for training they must find substitutes to do their work and pay them. If the War Office cut down their pay they were placing a hardship on these men and ran the risk of not obtaining any further recruits. Then as to the influence of the officers in obtaining recruits; it appeared that under this scheme the Secretary of State wished to get the officers to give up more time for camp and do more than they did at present in the way of the training of officers. Speaking for himself, he could not make it possible to give up more time than he did at present. As it was he gave up a great deal of time, and every officer in the House who commanded a regiment or squadron of Yeomanry would tell them that the duties in connection with it took up a great deal of time if the work was to be done efficiently. If the War Office was going to put a greater tax on the officers they would drive out many of them, and thus their influence as a body for recruiting purposes would be lessened, and it must be borne in mind, as he had said, that that influence was a great help in recruiting. As to the usefulness of the Yeomanry in the late war, he did not know what the country would have done without them, because everybody admitted that they were of the greatest use. It was said that in two or three years [excellent Yeomanry officers could be made, but a man could not handle a large number of mounted troops at a rapid pace without experience. It was a matter which could only be mastered by practice, and the sense of what ought to be done ought to come to a commanding officer as an instinct. Any mistake in warfare might mean great disaster when committed within the range of rapid-firing guns. Therefore, Yeomanry officers should have a training which enabled them to take part in active warfare and they could not be trained at once. In three years a man who on joining the regiment could not shoot and who rode indifferently became an efficient shot and a very fair rider, and it required a still longer period to make him an expert officer. Another point which arose was the difficulty of training men for sentry duty. It was very difficult to get them not to act upon their own initiative, but if in actual warfare they did not obey orders exactly sentries might cause great disaster to an army. He remembered a case in which a man was allowed to pass, and when he questioned the sentry and asked "Why did you allow the man to pass?" he replied "Oh, he said, he was a friend of yours, and I thought you would like to see him." It was only after many years that efficient officers and men could be made, and he thought that under the proposed conditions the efficiency of the force would not be kept up. He urged the Secretary of State before he reorganised the forces to have a thoroughly well thought-out plan prepared and not hastily do anything which might injure the Army.

*CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down E.) asked for some more details of the scheme as it affected Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had fully and fairly explained the effect on the Militia, Yeomanry, Volunteers, and Artillery of Great Britain, but had so far been unable to satisfy those who were at the present time in Ireland looking anxiously for some explanation of what was to happen, first of all, to the Militia, and, secondly, to those two grand corps, the North of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry and the South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry. If without any Volunteers in Ireland the Yeomanry and Militia were unable to come into the Territorial scheme in the same way as those of Great Britain it was the more necessary for the right hon. Gentleman to give some hint of what the fate of these forces was to be. He desired first of all to touch on the Militia, because that was a question that had caused a great deal of excitement in Ireland, and he spoke on behalf of a number of gentlemen who were heartily desirous of putting these Irish forces on a permanent sound footing. If the scheme was carried out in the way in which the right hon. Gentleman wished it carried out, no matter what criticisms were made by those with whom he sat, or whether their ideas were embraced or not, or whether what they desired was brought into the scheme or not, they would endeavour to make the scheme, when it appeared in the light of day, as successful as possible. He hoped, therefore, that their criticisms would at all events receive consideration. Undoubtedly the gravest and most important situation was pictured by the Leader of the Opposition who, with his usual acumen, went straight to the point when he implied that the real difficulties lay in the fact that the right hon. Gentleman was substituting for the system of Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers, which were three channels for providing a fighting force, one channel for the same purpose. His right hon. friend brought them down to the bed-rock of discussion when he pointed out that in providing any new Army schemes they must start with the assumption that at all events it was possible for such a war to break out as to necessitate the employment of not only the whole of the Regular but also of the Auxiliary Forces. Because the problem that they had to come back to after all was, when the Regulars and the Reserves had been sent to the front, had the Government taken the trouble to find out what they could do to help the country in such a time of need. He regretted that the right hon. Gentleman and his advisers had not begun at the bottom of the tree instead of the top, and faced this problem fairly and squarely. He left the Regular officers in the House to deal with the Regular Forces and would turn his attention to the Auxiliary forces, which they desired to bring up to the highest pitch of perfection.

The right hon. Gentleman had sacrificed the Militia, and they had practically heard the last of a force of which its officers had been extremely proud. The right hon. Gentleman in his memorandum stated that these time honoured regiments must disappear—

> "It had been found they were quite inefficient to take the field against European troops."

He also found that the old constitutional force—

> "Had driftedinto a position in which its main purpose in time of peace is to furnish troops for the line, and that it must be released before it can regain the position in the Regular Army to which it is entitled by its great traditions."

He would like to know what the right hon. Gentleman meant by the expression "released." He was afraid the responsibility for the decadence of nine regiments of Militia was to be placed upon those inspecting officers who came year after year to the training grounds, returned to their headquarters and gave in favourable Reports. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to call for the private and confidential Reports of the generals who took part in the late war. He remembered the colonels of three regiments—the 3rd Royal Scots, the 4th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and the Royal Irish Rifles—saying they had the most flattering accounts of the way in which the Militia served in South Africa. The letters stated that no Regular regiments could have done better the work they had to do. The blame for the state of part of the Militia did not rest therefore with the officers, who had striven their hardest to make their regiments a success, and who, if the inspecting officers had only pointed out the faults they noticed, would have done all they could to bring them up to modern requirements. His next point was with regard to the relations between the officers of the Regular Army and the officers of the Auxiliary Forces. He felt most strongly on this matter and drew the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to it last year when he entered on his term of responsible office. Now, while the memory of the South African war was fresh, steps should be taken to impress on the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Regular Army the duty of welcoming more heartily than they did on the last occasion the Auxiliary Forces which were sent out to their assistance. He did not say this in any factious spirit, or because he had in mind any particular case, but undoubtedly at the beginning of the war a large number of the senior officers, who had not seen active service before, looked with a not particularly favourable eye upon the Volunteers, and a good deal of mischief resulted. These officers should have had trained into them the feeling that though a man may be by profession a soldier he should receive and treat on terms of equality those who volunteered to go out and assist the Regular Army. Now was the time to do this, for if they waited they would have a new generation of officers growing up without a personal recollection of the war and the usefulness of the Auxiliary Forces. It could be done through the text books handed to the youngest recruit in the barrack-room, or the officer still at the University. The Red-book had many useless pages, occupied with instructions how to salute, and how to hold the rifle in one position or another. It would be well if those were cut away, and in their stead officers reminded that they were the trustees of the great Volunteer Army of the Empire, and that they were to take under their care not only the men of the Regular Army who had been trained for years and made a profession of the Service, but also those who had at all events done their very best at a time of necessity when the nation asked them. He spoke with some knowledge of the matter, for he had the unique experience of having passed through all the ranks, having been a cadet at school, a Volunteer, a Militia officer, a Yeomanry officer, and of having served for a short time on the staff in South Africa. The Government had taken undue risk in swamping first the Militia, then the Yeomanry and then the vast number of Volunteers. It was all very well in time of peace to say that they would all be embodied and work as a unit together, but it was absolutely useless on the outbreak of war. He could see that utter confusion would take place if it were true as the Under-Secretary for the Colonies had said that the new force would be merely for the defence of the soil. He thought the soil was never in very great danger, and even if it were every man in Great Britain and Ireland would become a Volunteer to keep out an invading army. Neither uniforms nor the changes suggested for the Volunteers were necessary to keep out foreign invasion. The Secretary for War had failed in confusing the issue by saying it was a territorial Army and hoping that the time would come when whole divisions or brigades would volunteer for service abroad in the hour of emergency. A Volunteer who would go to-day might to-morrow be unwilling or unable to go and so there would be a difficulty. He would rather have a sort of skeleton scheme on a great scale all ready to take drafts from different parts of the country rather than see the whole country bound down to one distinct idea which he did not think would work well when it came to the actual point. Another difficulty was that the scheme cancelled regiments and their names. It would take years and years in his opinion really to create a local interest in a corps. He urged the Secretary for War to preserve local names and local traditions as much as possible. It might be called sentiment, but sentiment bore a far greater part in the Volunteer Army than in one recruited by compulsion. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would also see that the flags of the regiments were preserved. and also the old relics of the regiments which had been treasured in the regiments for centuries. In conclusion, in Ireland the only outlet for the spirit of militarism was the Militia. The right hon. Gentleman had cut off that source from those who desired to take part in the defence of their country. Supposing the new scheme came into force, he would like to know what would be the position of persons who would be obliged to serve in time of war, because he understood the scheme proposed that men in the Militia could be called upon to serve abroad. What position would the Militia officers in Ireland be in in that particular regard ? There would be far too small a number of Regular officers for such a gigantic scheme as the one proposed. Those who had any real knowledge of the working of the Militia and Yeomanry knew that they could not expect a good force unless there was a larger sprinkling of Regular adjutants and instructors. The services of such officers would give greater security in time of war. He urged that the War Secretary's scheme was not sufficiently explanatory. It should be placed before the people in such a way as would interest them and made attractive in order to induce men to join. He would further suggest one more suitable for all classes of Volunteers. The right hon. Gentleman would make a vital mistake if his scheme for a territorial army was not put forward in an acceptable manner, capable of being easily understood by those who were expected to join. They who were interested in these matters would try to help the right hon. Gentleman in every way in their power; they would continue to use their influence to get Volunteers to join, whatever the scheme put before them; all he asked the right hon. Gentleman was that he should give them something a little more authentic than the very short and curt statement which had been issued, which was rather uninteresting, and not at all a readable document compared with some that they had seen before. He did not want to throw the apple of discord into what had been an amicable debate on both sides, and removed as far as possible from Party lines; but one point, from the beginning, had struck him as rather serious—he referred to that part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech where he turned to those on the Benches behind him and spoke about this scheme "not leading up to militarism." He had put it so pointedly, and on two occasions, too, that he trusted the right hon. Gentleman would cast all ideas of that kind entirely behind him, because he would never get anything from people who held those views as to militarism, no matter how long he was Minister for War; he would rather that the right hon. Gentleman tried to cultivate the spirit of those who were desirous of helping him in the scheme he had introduced.

*MAJOR McMICKING (Kirkcudbrightshire) said in reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil and also in regard to a letter which had appeared in *The Times*, it was suggested that if this scheme failed, the only alternative was compulsory service. That was not his opinion. In the first place, he was convinced that national sentiment was opposed to compulsion as regarded military service in any form whatever. In the second place, he saw no reason why this scheme, with some modification, should not be a very great success. He said some modification, because he did think that, as regarded the artillery, modification was necessary. It was proposed to have seventy-two batteries of field artillery in the Field Force, and these were provided with ammunition columns; he understood that there was a surplus of thirty-three batteries of six guns. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to put those batteries on the four-gun basis, and he supposed that the surplus sixty-six eighteen-pounder guns would be put in store and used on mobilisation to make up the four-gun batteries to six-gun batteries. He would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should not put any guns in store, but that all those 198 guns should be available with which to form batteries. On a four-gun basis that would give very nearly fifty batteries, and of that number of batteries why should not a certain number, officered and manned by Regulars, be used as a stiffening for the territorial Army? He thought that suggestion was worthy of the right hon. Gentleman's consideration. With regard to brigade ammunition columns he understood that the right hon. Gentleman had not yet decided whether he would have them manned with the Special Contingent officers and men or not, for the reason that they came into the zone of fire. Although it might be strictly accurate to say that these brigade ammunition columns came into the fire zone, he would like to point out, that as a rule they transferred their ammunition to the battery waggon line under cover. In the Field Artillery Training Manual for last year, it stated that if the waggon line was in an exposed position the empty waggons should, if possible, be withdrawn under cover, to refill from the ammunition column. He saw no reason why they should not be manned by Special Contingent officers and men even if they had temporarily to replace casualties in the firing line from them. The divisional ammunition columns would, of course, supply the brigade ammunition columns, but he did not understand what was exactly meant when the right hon. Gentleman mentioned the park. There must always be a base depot where the troops disembarked, and as progress was made a field park at rail head. He should like to know would the base depot and field park be manned by officers and men from the Special Contingent. With regard to the artillery of the territorial Army he gathered that there would be fourteen batteries of Horse Artillery, 126 batteries of Field Artillery, twenty-eight Howitzer batteries, and fourteen heavy batteries. If it was proposed in regard to fourteen batteries of Horse Artillery that they should have the old 12-pounder Horse Artillery gun he hoped such a scheme would not be carried out, because after all that weapon could only be described as a pop-gun as compared with the latest pattern guns. This was a large force and it looked well on paper, but he would ask the Secretary for War seriously to consider the matter before he carried out his scheme for the creation of this great artillery force. The Duke of Norfolk's Commission which inquired into the Militia and Volunteer Forces reported that they had heard and considered evidence in regard to both the Militia and Volunteers and their conclusion was that without a large amount of expenditure and a large number of officers and men from the Regular Army it would be useless to attempt to form field batteries in either of those forces. He thought it would be quite right to try an experiment with Volunteer Field Artillery, but the great difficulty he foresaw was obtaining competent commanding officers for those batteries. If they could get retired Regular officers to command those batteries he saw no reason why they should not be a success, but officers of the necessary experience willing to command such batteries were not very plentiful. He would like to give one or two reasons why he thought difficulties would arise. The commanding officer of a Volunteer battery had to understand not only the technical side of artillery work but also horsemastership. However well-trained batteries might be, unless the horses were properly looked after, the guns might not be able to come into action when wanted. The hon. and gallant Member for Fareham spoke yesterday of the new weapons in use and alluded to the difficulty of training Volunteers to manipulate those weapons in order to make the best use of them. He totally disagreed with that view, because the rank and file of the Volunteer artillery were first-rate men and they were the very people who would grasp at once the handling of scientific weapons. He had for a short time been an adjutant of Volunteer artillery in Lancashire and the way the skilled artisans there handled their guns was to him most extraordinary. If they could get good officers the rank and file would be all right and the right hon. Gentleman's Volunteer artillery scheme would be a very great success. He felt that the scheme should be brought into operation very slowly, and by way of experiment, because if this new departure was made and this great force of Volunteer artillery was all at once created a tremendous responsibility would be incurred. Having had some practical experience in these matters he thought it was his duty to get up and say a few words upon the subject.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover) congratulated the Secretary of State for War on the fine scheme that he had worked out. If it turned out to be a workable scheme he did not think there was one man in the House who would not be pleased. With regard to the special contingent of 75,000 men, he thought the right hon. Gentleman was somewhat wrong in his mathematics. The full total of 75,000 men were not supposed to be fit for service until the end of six months, and therefore he would only get 37,500 men at the end of three months. Therefore, only half of them would be available. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would modify his view about a four years enlistment; he was afraid it would keep men from joining the ranks. He thought it was an excellent plan that volunteers should be able to transfer from one district to another. He would also suggest that when the Territorial Army was brought out for fifteen days it should be brought out so as to arrive on the Sunday, because in that case they would be able to get an extra day's training. With regard to the territorial Army it was clear that the infantry would be a great success provided they were good rifle shots before they came into the Army. His opinion was that if they amalgamated the rifle clubs and did not leave them so much to charity the territorial Army would be more efficient than if they simply brought the men into their ranks out of the street. He sincerely hoped the right hon. Gentleman would seriously consider the advisability of having rifle clubs affiliated with the Territorial Army. With regard to the artillery, after many years experience he had come to the conclusion that it was absolutely impossible to train a driver to draw guns for horse artillery in less than two years. In time of war he did not think they could accomplish this task inside a year, because the man in times of emergency who went into the Army had probably never ridden a horse before, and it took six months at least to learn to ride properly. Besides that the recruit had to learn to lead one horse as well as ride one, and that could not be done inside a year. He thought the right hon. Gentleman was going to have some difficulty in regard to the Yeomanry. He would like to know if the intention was to reduce the Yeomanry pay from 5s. 6d. per day to the ordinary pay of 1s. or 1s. 6d. immediately. Was he going to say to the Yeomanry, "Unless you come down immediately to 1s. 6d. per day you can go"? He was afraid that that proposal might lead to half the Yeomanry leaving, and then there would only be half the present force remaining. The late Chief Secretary for Ireland commanded as fine a body of men as it was possible to get in the Wilts Yeomanry, but he was certain that the men would be unable to afford to remain on if their pay were reduced. The commander of the Northampton Yeomanry had complained that he could not get a sufficient number of men even at 5s. 6d. per day, and he was afraid that there would not be a sufficient number of men forthcoming at 1s. 6d. per day. With regard to probationers for the cavalry he would like to know what was going to be done with them. At the end of two years would a young officer, having worked hard out of doors with his regiment, have to pass his examination? As to the question of pensions, there was an idea in some quarters that the right hon. Gentleman was against any scheme of pensions in the Army. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would reassure the House and the country on that question. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he could see his way to allow the time spent in the Army and Navy to count for pensions when men from these services entered the Civil Service. He thought it was very hard that the time so spent should not count in regard to pensions in the Civil Service.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) hoped the Committee would listen to a few observations from a totally different point of view from that adopted by most of the speakers who had preceded him. Colonels, majors, captains, and officers in every branch of the service had been ringing the changes on the details of Army reorganisation. He would not in the least depreciate the value or the erudition of their criticisms. But there was another class of Members who were not military men at all, and who had no love of militarism. They represented a large number of people outside the House—men and women who believed that the greatness of England rested, not on the science of war, but on the arts of peace; not on weapons of destruction, but on tools of construction. He confessed to being disappointed with the proposals made by the Secretary of State for War. He would vote with great hesitation for the very large number of men now asked for. He could not believe that the interests of the country were really served by so enormous a number. He thought the whole conception of our military system—the whole scale of the military defences as conceived by the present Government and preceding Governments—was out of all proportion to what was really necessary if only hey cultivated a friendly policy with the nations of the earth instead of destroying one another. He believed the idea of such a huge Army was out of harmony with the democratic opinion of the country. He appreciated as much as anyone the great skill, industry, and patience which the right hon Gentleman had brought to this question, and he was glad that so important a spending department should be in the hands of one so capable. He agreed equally with the right hon. Gentleman in desiring efficiency in the branch of the service over which he presided. They all wanted efficiency. It must not be supposed that those who were anti-military Members were against efficiency. They wanted value for their money like everybody else. The idea of having a striking force was offensive to him. What did we want a striking force for? Whom did we want to strike? Why did we not shake hands instead of striking at all? It was an idea which was utterly ridiculous to many present. There were some who held what was called the "menagerie theory," that they were kept from one another by barred cages, and that they were ready to fly at one another's throats the moment they got loose. He did not believe in any such theory. He would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he quite remembered or appreciated by what title he occupied his exalted position. Who had entrusted him with those powers and emoluments which he enjoyed? How did hon. Members who were going to support the right hon. Gentleman obtain their seats? As far as he himself was concerned—and he believed his experience was a very common one—it was by vowing that they would alter the extravagant expenditure of their predecessors. He had for years addressed crowded meetings of poor men and women, and he had told them that when a Liberal Government was in power it could run the country on £100,000,000; but that, after ten years of Tory rule, it cost £150,000,000, He told them that when the Liberals went out of office the Army cost £20,000,000, and that now it cost £30,000,000. He told them also that for every shilling the Liberal Government took out of their pockets for the Army and other purposes the Tories had for years been taking eighteen pence, and that when a democratic Government came into power again they would restore things as they formerly were. It was on those pledges that he got his seat, and it was on those pledges that he was supporting the present Government. He therefore expressed sincere disappointment that such an enormous proposal as that under discussion should have been put before the House in the second session of the present Parliament. The country at the general election asked for a reversal of the extravagant policy of the late Government, and for an entire change in regard to the bloated armaments which they had built up—armaments which in his judgment, so far from making for peace, really made for war. He believed that the taxpayers of the country could not afford to pay for all the men now asked for. In this connection he thought of the poor country labourers who earned small wages and had to pay enormously high rents for most insanitary and uncomfortable houses. Having had close intercourse with that class for years he could state that they did not want to pay for costly officers and the machinery of war. They asked for old-age pensions, but the Government said they could not afford the cost, though they were taking the money of these people and spending it on the costly machinery of war. The burden of the peace charges in this country was worse, because it was permanent, than an occasional war. It was like the case of a man who paid a high premium for insurance. It was better to run the risk of a fire. He had been told on the authority of one whom he could trust that we were paying for a larger number of men than even the greatest military Power in the world. If that was so how could they support the Government? With what sort of face could they propose to other Powers a mutual and reciprocal reduction? The Secretary of State for War was in an illustrious position, but other and greater Ministers had stood at that table. Fifty years ago Mr. Disraeli had said there was a niche in the temple of fame for the ruler or Minister who would be the first to grapple with the question of military expenditure. He wished his right hon. friend would occupy that niche. He had hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would in his proposals have shown a greater desire for the reduction of armaments.

MR. HALDANE expressed the hope that the Committee would now give Vote A on the understanding that the discussion would be continued on another Vote.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £9,835,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Pay, &c., of His Majesty's Army (including Army Reserve) at Home and Abroad (exclusive of India), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908."

MR. J. WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said that he could assure the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War that it having been decided that the organisation of the Army was in a bad way and that it was necessary to reorganise that branch of the public service, his criticisms of the proposed new scheme would be devoted to removing what he considered were one or two blemishes in it.

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

METROPOLITAN WATER BOARD (CHARGES, ETC.) BILL [BY ORDER].

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) moved the rejection of the measure because he believed it was so manifestly unjust. It was introduced because there was an undertaking that three years after the appointed day of the coming into force of the Act of 1902 a Bill should be introduced to equalise the water rates over the whole area supplied by the Metropolitan Water Board. He was connected with a large company having premises in the City and they paid water rates to the amount of £8 a year. The water was only used for washing the hands of the clerks, as nobody lived on the premises. That was a fair rate, but the premises had to be rebuilt, and the rate was raised to £69 for exactly the same amount of water.

That showed that the Bill would overreach itself. The Bank of England at the present moment were sinking wells on their own premises so as not to come within the power of the Metropolitan Water Board, and other bankers, who were not going to submit to the enormous rates put upon them, proposed also to sink their own wells. He had spoken to the officials of the Board on this matter, and they said that to equalise the rates was to make a proper payment all round, and that if occupiers of property did not use the water, certain rebates were allowed them. But under this Bill they were going to charge 5 per cent. upon the rating value, which would more than double the water rate on premises in the City which were hardly used at all. That was not equalisation of the rates in any sense. The most unjust part of the Bill, to his mind, was Clause 26, which was, he might say, a new punishment, and one that was never thought of by the old water companies. He was one of those who thought that the old water companies were not so bad as they were believed to be. At anyrate, the citizens got a certain amount of justice from them. The Metropolitan Water Board acted as a public body, and a public body only cared for getting in the money. Clause 26 said that at any moment the whole supply of water that was not necessary for domestic use could be cut off. He wanted the House to consider what that involved. He represented a part of Middlesex where the land was given up to market gardening and to glass-houses for the cultivation of plants. In his own constituency there were acres and acres of glass-houses. If this clause passed, and in the middle of June the owners of these glass-houses received notice that the supply of water was to be suddenly cut off, every plant in those houses would be utterly destroyed and the owners ruined. That was not the sort of thing that they should expect from a public body. He had informed the Water Board that sufficient notice should be given before the supply was cut off, and their reply was that they wanted to give the domestic supply first. But the Board must know beforehand what amount of water they had in the reservoirs, and surely they could give notice about cutting off the supply to the owners of the glass-houses without ruining them. Moreover, he contended that the Board was bound to supply water for trade purposes just as much as for domestic purposes, and, therefore, they ought to make sufficient reservoirs. There was no doubt that the interchanging of the water between the old companies had after it was introduced prevented the shortage of the supply in any district. He knew that the water companies were only allowed to take so much water out of the river, but on two occasions when they found themselves unable to comply with the demand for water they went to the Conservancy Board which allowed them to draw millions of gallons more than they were permitted by their Acts. The Conservancy Board would be sure to allow this to be done in order that traders such as he represented should not be injured or ruined. Then let them take the case of the locomotive engines running into London. He was told that the London and North Western Railway would have to stop running many of their trains if the water supply was suddenly cut off. That would be a loss not only to the railway company but to the community all round. He hoped the House would not permit the Bill, which was so manifestly unjust, to pass, and he moved that it be read a second time that day six months.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that although it was true that the Metropolitan Water Board were obliged to introduce a Bill to make all charges uniform, it did not follow that the Act compelled them to introduce the Bill in its present form. While the measure would cause the rating in London to be of a most unfair description and would cast an additional burden upon a large number of people, it would only in one district result in any lightening of the existing burden. For that reason alone it ought to be rejected. But it did something which was not contemplated by the Act of 1902—it made all sorts of alterations with regard not only to charges relating to the domestic supply, but also to charges for trade purposes. It conferred powers which had never been granted before to any water company. It must be remembered that London was not one City, but a conglomeration of cities under one authority, and any attempt to charge a uniform rate for London was doomed from the first to failure. But it might be said that when the Unionist Government brought in their Bill, they were not aware what sum of money the Water Board, having agreed to take over the undertakings of the water companies, would have to pay in compensation to the water companies for their business, and he thought it might be fairly argued that they were bound to introduce some clause of that sort in order that there might be no failure in obtaining money for securing a water supply for London. But the House now knew the actual sum which was paid to the water companies for their property. It was £32,818,609. That was to say, that amount of stock was issued to the water companies in payment of their shares, and as the House knew, the debenture stocks were left untouched as they were dealt with in a different manner. In addition nearly £1,500,000 stock was issued in order to provide for the remuneration of the directors for loss of fees, and there were various sums paid in connection with the Enfield and Tottenham District Councils. That made altogether £34,318,609. That was a three per cent. stock, and a simple calculation would show that the interest on it amounted to £1,029,000 a year. The net income of the water companies in their last completed year, that was to say, their income after paying the interest on their debenture stock and which was available for the payment of dividend was £1,039,872. Therefore the Metropolitan Water Board had at once an advantage of £10,000 a year, but in addition to that, there was a payment made to the Chamberlain of London for sinking fund of £40,652, which payment was not to be continued by the Water Board. If that £40,652 was added to the £10,000 he had mentioned, there was over £50,000 in favour of the Metropolitan Water Board. He would take at £10,000 the interest on the preference stock, but he was prepared to leave that out, and there still remained the fees which were payable to the companies' directors, which amounted to £15,000 or £16,000, making altogether £66,000 a year, and the economies which ought to have been made through the consolidation of the different companies and their offices, would bring up the sum that ought to have accrued to the Metropolitan Water Board in the way of a saving to something like £70,000 a year. If the Board had managed their affairs in the businesslike way that the water companies had done, that amount would have been available for the relief of water rates. In addition to that, it must be remembered that the rateable value of London since 1902 had increased by three or four per cent., and therefore there should be an additional gain accruing to the Water Board by reason of that increase. He had brought out all these figures because he wanted to show that there could be no contention on the part of the Metropolitan Water Board that they had paid too much to the water companies, and that the necessities of the case compelled them to come forward and raise the charges to the consumers. Before the Metropolitan Water Board, there were eight companies supplying water. Their charges were as follows:—Southwork and Vauxhall and East London, 5 per cent. on the annual value of the house; Chelsea, Grand Junction, New River, and West Middlesex, 4 per cent. per annum on houses not exceeding annual value of £200, above £200 3 per cent.; Kent, about 6 per cent. for houses up to £20 per annum, 5 per cent. up to £50 per annum, and gradually decreasing up to £95 per annum, when it was 4 per cent., and all beyond £95 was 4 per cent.; Lambeth, 7½ per cent. for houses not exceeding £20, 7 per cent. for houses not exceeding £40, 6½ per cent. for houses not exceeding £60. In the City the old charge was 4 per cent. on rateable value up to £200 and 3 per cent. over that figure. It would be seen that in the case of seven of these companies the annual percentage on the rateable value, was excepting one class of houses under the Kent Company, 5 per cent. or under, but the Board proposed to make a uniform charge in these districts of 5 per cent. The consumers would not, therefore, benefit. In Lambeth only the case was different, and even there some consumers would not benefit. He said earlier in his remarks that London was a vast conglomeration of cities and not one city, and it was impossible to make one rate which would be fair to everybody. The system under which water rates in London had been levied for a very great number of years had been, roughly, that in regard to domestic supply it was not advisable to charge by meter for the actual amount of water supplied, but to levy a percentage on the rateable value, the object being that people should be encouraged, as it was thought they would not be if they paid entirely by meter, not to stint water, because, in the interests of health, a certain amount of water must be used and it was thought that a percentage on the rateable value was the better way, because then water would be used without regard to the actual cost. Of course, the actual result of that was that in the poorer districts they obtained their water at a very much lower rate than in the richer districts. That could not be objected to, because it was necessary for the health of London, and he was sure that those who lived in the larger houses did not mind, seeing that the policy was for the health of London. In his opinion the rates in London must be different. Let them take a house in the City the rateable value of which was £1,000 a year. Under the new system they would have to pay £50 and for that sum probably no water of that value would be used. There would probably be only four or five rooms in which the clerks would number from ten to twenty, and the only water used would be for the purpose of washing their hands. In Lambeth, however, in a house rated at £50, the quantity of water used would be double or treble the quantity used in the City in a house rated at £1,000 a year. Again, in the case of a house in Belgrave Square the rateable value would be five or six times that of a house in Islington, and yet the water used in the Islington house would be five or six times as much as that consumed in Belgrave Square. What they had to look at was not the percentage on rateable value, but what the rateable value was, and as London was divided up into all these different kinds of cities, it was impossible with any fairness to introduce a uniform rate. The City was a very exceptional place. [Laughter.] Well, the City had done a great deal to make London what it was. Hon. Gentlemen opposite might laugh at the City, but if it had not been for the City of London he was not sure they would have been sitting in their places at the present moment. In regard to the supply of water for domestic purposes only, the result of this change would be startling in the City. The charges would be something like double the present amount. He was informed that in the case of two large banks the payment would amount to from £3 10s. to £3 15s. per head per annum of the staff employed. That was evidence that the uniform charge of 5 per cent. which the Water Board proposed would be exceedingly onerous. It was estimated that the increased payments for water in the City alone would amount to over £100,000 a year. In addition to that, it must be remembered that water was used in the City for trade purposes. Under the old companies they were compelled to supply water for trade purposes on a sliding scale varying from 6d. to 7½d. per thousand gallons, accord- to the quantity used. In lieu of these charges, the Bill proposed that the Metropolitan Water Board might charge 1s. a thousand gallons, which was an increase of nearly 100 per cent., but even at that price they were not obliged to supply the water, and need only supply it if they thought fit to do so. He wished to put it to the House, therefore, whether they did not think that the Water Board had failed in its duty when it increased its charges from 6d. and 7½d. per thousand gallons to 1s., and then added a provision that they should not be compelled to supply the water and could cut it off at any moment. That was not all, because if premises were used for both domestic and trade purposes and the supply was taken by meter the Board might levy a charge equal to 5 per cent. on the rateable value of the premises. Thus in any case the charge by meter was not to be less than the charge on rateable value could have been. The railway stations and refreshment rooms in London used water for other than domestic purposes. They used it for trade purposes. Supposing the Water Board refused to supply water for engines, they could charge 5 per cent. on the rateable value of Euston Square for the water supplied to the lavatories and the waiting-rooms. He had, he thought, shown that the promoters of the Bill did not know what they were doing, or else they were not fit to introduce a Bill of such a character. The rise in the charge for trade purposes from 6d. to 1s. per 1,000 gallons must strike everybody as being most onerous, and coming as it did at the present time when trade was leaving London for other parts of the country, it would have the effect of accelerating that departure, and adding to the burden of the ratepayers, because directly the Board could not sell sufficient water to pay its way it would come upon the rates, and the ratepayers would not only have their charge put at

5 per cent., but probably much higher. He had figures also to show that the Bill would alter the assessment of London by something like £62,000. He had put the position as shortly as he could, but he hoped he had also put it clearly before the House. He had endeavoured to show that the system of rating under the old companies was on the whole just. There were anomalies, no doubt, but on the whole the system was fair. A uniform rate would not work well. He would point out that the rate was highest where the water had to be pumped the highest, and that was the case at Lambeth, which had the highest rate, because, standing as it did on high hills, the water had to be pumped higher to supply that district than it had to supply any other. He had endeavoured to show that the percentage was right, and that the Water Board had gone far beyond the necessity of their obligation under the Act of 1902. He begged to second the rejection of the Bill.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Dixon-Hartland.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*Mr. BARNARD (Kidderminster) said the seconder of the Amendment had expressed his strong approval of the position held by the old companies, and had stated the opinion that the Board should occupy the place of the eight companies and two urban councils which they succeeded. He did not point out, however, that there was a section in the Act of 1902 which imposed on the Water Board the distinct obligation to bring in a Bill to insure a uniform scale of charge, and it was to fulfil that obligation that the Bill before the House had been introduced. It was perfectly well known that there were ten different sets of charges in the great metropolitan area, and the Water Board took the opinion of counsel, and were advised that the proper course was to introduce a Bill on the lines of that now before the House. The hon. Members who moved and seconded the Amendment seemed to imagine that the Water Board was necessarily going to charge a maximum of 5 per cent., but all the Water Board had to do was to produce to the House a scheme which would lead to a scale of fairness and justice between the 7,000,000 people living in the area of the Water Board. They were not there in the same way as the promoters of an ordinary private Bill. The ratepayers, who were also the consumers, were represented on the Water Board, the membership of which was sixty-six, of whom fourty-four came from London proper. These members were therefore well able to look into the whole matter in the committees of the Water Board when the Bill was put forward. They came from various parts of London, and represented a variety of interests, and if there had been any particular injustice they would have been certain to argue it in order that it might receive consideration. It would not perhaps be out of place if he pointed out that the Water Board was responsible for providing water for 7,000,000 people; that it had to find 250,000,000 gallons of water a day, and that for this undertaking they had been required to pay £45,000,000. The hon. Baronet had said they ought to be saving £70,000 a year, but it had to be borne in mind that a public body could not always do what was done by a private individual. They had to pay higher wages and they were glad to do it. Another thing the hon. Baronet had not alluded to was that although they issued their stock at 3 per cent. that stock had to be issued just after a war, for which they were not responsible, and the additional cost to them in consequence was about £3,000,000. Then there was the price they had to pay owing to compulsory purchase, which the County Council would have avoided if they could. The real point about this Bill was that they first of all had to contemplate the public health question, and to see before they came to the business arrangments that they safeguarded the sanitation and matters of that description. The mover and seconder with a good deal of skill had avoided the issue he desired to bring before the House. The Water Board had come to the conclusion that all the extra charges for water closets and baths and other things must be abolished in order that there should not be any excuse for stinting the poorer houses. The Board had not increased the water rates in London since they had been in office, and yet they had been able to pay their way in the first two years they had been at work. They could stand as the only municipal undertaking of such magnitude in the world that had been able to pay their way without charging their customers anything extra. He ventured to think that their management was a credential that they were trustworthy and had some knowledge of their business. They had 1,100,000 customers; they could not lower the price to everybody, and had therefore to consider the method they should adopt. The Bill benefited or did not hurt 800,000 people and slightly injured 200,000. He did not know how it was possible to hold the scale without injuring some and necessarily benefiting others. He found that the right hon. Baronet was quite wrong. They had 124 different local authorities inside the area of "Water London," and this scheme benefited eighty-five of the different governing authorities that he was referring to It left thirty-nine either neutral or only slightly affected. He did not think it could be considered such a dreadful proposition when they could benefit 800,000 and only slightly injure 200,000. He came to the 5 per cent. point. If they maintained all the extra charges that they proposed to get rid of, what was the position? The old companies could charge from 3 to 7½ per cent.; if they put extras on they could charge roughly from 4 to 11⅓ per cent. In this Bill they proposed to charge no one more than 5 per cent., and it did not follow in the slightest degree that they would have to exercise that power to the full. They were not working to make dividends; they were simply working on the principle that they required £3,000,000 a year to carry on the water arrangements of London. That money must be collected in some form or other, and he believed that the scheme he was now supporting did it in a just way. The whole tendency of the passing of the Water Works Clauses Act had taken this form. Parliament had not given any new powers to any statutory company without safeguarding the poorer portion of the people inside the area over which the powers were given. They were asking for less powers than most provincial towns possessed, and they were asking power to charge a less rate than was charged in provincial towns. The London County Council had very properly lodged objections based upon arguments which deserved the fullest consideration, but they did not attack the principle of the Bill. As to the borough councils, as far as he knew, there would be no one there that night who would say a word on their behalf against the proposal. Those boroughs adversely affected would have opportunity to put forward their objections in the committee room. What did the City do? He found there were objections in the names of the Member for Rochester and the Member for Sussex; and he found in *The Times* newspaper a statement which apparently represented the combined wisdom of the hon. Baronet and the right hon. Baronet. What did they say? That in Liverpool, under certain conditions, there was a charge by meter, but *The Times*, or its informant, avoided stating that in Liverpool they charged a sixpenny rate on property all over the area to make good their water revenue. If they allowed him, on behalf of his Board, to charge a public rate over the City of London, very likely he would be putting forward a different tale about the supply of water. What did these gentlemen fear? They had not increased the rate in the last three or four years; and the House had not been told that the Board allowed 30 per cent. off every assessment in the city if it was over £300 a year. That was a fact which he would have liked the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London to mention.

SIR F. BANBURY: Are you going to do it in future?

*MR. BARNARD said they had not put anything in the Bill which showed a desire to take away any concessions which they were giving; further than that, the scheme was calculated upon what they were now charging in the City, and he had every reason to suppose that in future they would continue to do the same. The Member for Middlesex had said that a great many people were thinking of sinking wells in the City. Let them do so if they had that privilege, but why should they come to that House and object to the Board's continuing a custom for which they had been called upon to pay very heavily in the past. It must be remembered that they had had to pay the water companies a huge sum of money, based upon the income they were then earning, and when they had paid that money they were confronted by those who said that they should not have the income for which they had paid. Now he came to the very important question of the fire brigade. The hon. Baronet had told them that the City was described as the fire danger zone of London, and the Water Board were obliged to provide water, without any charge, to guard the City in the event of fire. The mains had to be kept fully charged at very heavy expense. If the Board were to lose their income from the City, where were they to get it from? In 1884 the City promoted a Bill in which they deliberately asked that they should be allowed to take water by meter. That Bill was defeated, and in a memorable speech Lord Randolph Churchill said they were seeking to raid the water companies, and that if they tried these socialistic ideas they would be making a rope for their own neck. The Bill was thrown out. The City of London and its Members were again divided that night. The present junior Member for the City was the Leader of the Opposition on the occasion to which he referred and voted in a direction opposed to that in which the senior Member for the City had just spoken. He came to the last point, that relating to the trade supply, which had been referred to by the hon. Member for Middlesex as a very dreadful thing. The Water Board simply regarded themselves as trustees, and that they were not entitled to give up any of the rights which apparently they possessed. Neither the mover nor the seconder of the Amendment had given a clear description of the position as to the trade supply to-day. The Southwark and Vauxhall Company as late as 1884 had an Act of Parliament, in which they put distinctly that they were not to give a trade supply unless the domestic supply had been first satisfied. In other words, they simply asked that if there should be a shortage of water, human beings should have the first drink. That was the principle he found in the legislation affecting water throughout the country. In the present Bill they had copied the model clauses, and if the Committee had anything to say as to that the reply was that the Board had simply followed the ordinary custom in the proposition they were putting forward. Clause 23 of the model Bill of 1906 was absolutely the one, together with another, which they had adopted in this Bill, and in doing so he believed they were conforming to the ordinary custom and rules. Four of the companies were under no obligation to give a trade supply at all. The right hon. Baronet talked about injuring trade, but he could not have acquainted himself fully with the Acts of Parliament, which in four cases showed that they were not under any obligation to provide a trade supply and in three other cases they were only obliged to do it under certain restrictions. All they did by this Bill was to bring the matter to a general level. For those reasons he hoped the House would allow the Bill to be read a second time.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea) said the hon. Member for the City of London, with some force and considerable ingenuity, had advanced certain claims for the constituency which he represented. It passed through his mind while he was speaking how much more ably and ingeniously the hon. Baronet would have been able to advance arguments for the other constituency which he used to represent in the House. The hon. Member for Uxbridge to some extent had proved a case for this Bill's going to a Committee. He had pointed out that certain trade interests ought to be delicately handled, and he had stated that if a water supply was denied to them at too short a notice they might sustain in many cases irremediable damage. Surely differential treatment of that kind should not be discussed on the Second Reading of a Bill. On behalf of the Local Government Board he had risen to say that the Water Board came to the House of Commons in discharge of a statutory obligation which was placed upon them by Parliament three or four years ago. A clause in the Water Act introduced by the last Government specifically laid it upon the Water Board that they should not until otherwise authorised by Parliament reduce the water rate below what it was in June, 1902, unless they were satisfied that such a reduction would not cause a deficiency in the Water Board funds; but at the same time the Water Board were compelled to promote a Bill to secure a uniform scale of charges. Parliament would be stultifying itself if it did not give the Water Board the proper opportunity to prove that the scale proposed was the best method of dealing with the water rates of the metropolis. Parliament clearly intended that there should be a uniform scale of charges, and therefore this Bill ought to be read a second time and the technical matters which had been referred to should be left to the lawyers who would represent the City when the measure came before the Committee. If the City of London had a good case the House might rely upon the Committee to differentiate between general statements made in this House and that kind of information obtained by cross-questioning which produced the real facts, and which was necessary in this particular type of case. Therefore he asked the House to pass the Second Reading and allow the Bill to go upstairs. If the hon. Member for Uxbridge could prove to the Committee that market gardeners would be liable to be treated in the way he had referred to he was convinced that the hon. Member's constituency would get that protection which he desired from a Committee of the House of Commons. In due course the Local Government Board would present a Report to the Committee in the usual way. In conclusion he wished to say that the Water Board, under great difficulties, had done their best to discharge the huge task laid upon them by Parliament, and the proper tribunal to decide the points in dispute was a Committee of this House.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) wished to give one or two reasons why they could not abandon their position in regard to this Bill. There were certain things which required no evidence to establish them and in regard to which no cross-examination was necessary. One of those things was a case where a local authority or a company came to Parliament with a private Bill and, under cover of discharging a Parliamentary obligation, indulged in the luxury of proposing highly adventurous legislative experiments altogether different from their legal obligations. The Water Board was under an obligation to effect the equalisation of charges over their area, but for that purpose it was not necessary to say that the owners should pay rates instead of the occupiers. In many cases the owners were prevented by statute from making any change in the rent which should accompany an obligation to pay the water rate. It was not equalisation to say that a railway station should pay water rates upon its full rateable value when the amount of water consumed was totally out of proportion to the rateable value; it was not producing equality to say that a local authority in respect of water required for sewer flushing and road watering should pay a reasonable rate, whilst all other consumers might have demanded from them a rent which would not be reasonable. The same applied to the objectionable power to refuse a water supply for trade purposes altogether. All those matters were foreign to equalisation, and it was monstrous that any person should be compelled to go to the expense of appearing before the Committee upstairs fighting this great authority. He did not see why traders should be put to all that expense because this local authority chose to masquerade behind a pretended Parliamentary obligation for the purpose of conducting experiments which on the face of them were totally unjust and unreasonable.

*MR. ERNEST H. LAMB (Rochester) said the only argument which had been made in regard to this measure was that it had been brought in because of a statutory obligation, but surely that did not compel the Metropolitan Water Board to bring in a Bill which was so unjust as this measure. He was rather surprised at the language used by the hon. Member for Kidderminster. He might say that he was not ashamed of being a Member for the City of London Corporation. He was glad that this was not a Party question. The hon. Member for Kidderminster asked why they opposed this measure when large companies and trading concerns had the option of sinking wells. If they did that and secured their own water supply they would compel the Water Board to fall back upon Clause 15 of the Act of 1902 which gave them power to levy a general rate for any deficiency and that would fall heavily upon the very people whom the hon. Member for Kidderminster was so anxious to protect. Again the hon. Member opposite had laid stress upon the fact that the 5 per cent. charge provided for in the Bill was a maximum charge, and would not necessarily be enforced by the Water Board, but, unfortunately, for his argument the financial basis of the Bill was that the Board under it should obtain approximately their present income. As a matter of fact, the proposals of the Bill were estimated to produce over £20,000 less than the Board's present income, and therefore they would be bound to levy the maximum 5 per cent. which had been referred to. He could not conceive anything more unjust than some of the provisions contained in the Bill, because it meant that one part of London was to be penalised at the expense of the other part. He thought a case had been made out for the rejection of the Bill. What would be the consequences if the advice of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board were taken and the Bill sent up to a Committee? It should not be forgotten that the London County Council, the City of London Corporation and other public authorities had petitioned against the Bill. Why should they allow thousands of pounds of public money to be spent in opposing a Bill which they honestly believed to be unjust as a whole? He hoped they would have the courage of their convictions, throw out the Bill on the Second Reading, and thus save the expense of opposing the same in Committee.

*MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said he held an impartial position in regard to this measure. To reduce all the water rates in London to the level of the lowest would involve a loss of £250,000 a year. Hon. Gentlemen opposite professed to be anxious that the rates should not be raised, but it was owing to their own action in recent years in opposing various Bills brought forward from time to time by the London County Council that the ratepayers had had to pay many millions more than they would have had to pay if the Bills had been passed. It was hardly doing justice to call this a City case, because the grievance was by no means confined to the City. The occupiers of large business premises, such as warehouses, were undoubtedly alarmed by the proposals of the Water Board, for while they were paying at the rate of 2 per cent. the Board took power to charge at the rate of 5 per cent. There was no security that they would not charge what Parliament had authorised them to charge. Property of that kind, therefore, was entitled to some protection, some such protection as was given in the Acts of many of the large provincial towns. He could mention a dozen cases throughout the country where Water Acts provided such protection. The Metropolitan Water Board went so far as to say that it was impossible in practice to frame a scale which would be applicable to all cases. He knew the difficulties, but he submitted that they were not impracticable. He thought, therefore, the hon. Gentlemen who had spoken had been well advised in putting their opinions before the House. The Bill affected not only the interests of London, but also of districts outside of London, and the proposal to make rateable value the basis and charge throughout the water area was unfavourable to London. Owing to the peculiar constitution of the Board the interests of London were not adequately protected. The London County Council had only fourteen representatives out of sixty-six. While joining in many of the objections to the Bill, he thought that the Board was entitled to ask that the House should send the measure to a Select Committee. The Board was only carrying out a statutory obligation, and all interests would, therefore, have the opportunity to fight out the details of the case before the Committee.

*MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing) said they all recognised the moderate tone of the last two speeches. He, however, differed from the last speaker in his statement that the ratepayers had had to pay more for the acquisition of the Water Companies by reason of Members on the present Opposition side of the House having opposed County Council Bills! The opposition to those Bills was due to the inherent defects in the proposals of the county council — schemes which were wild and unworkable—besides involving the giving of powers to the county councils which it was not desirable they should possess. The Radical Party were the cause of London ratepayers having to pay some £11,000,000 or £12,000,000 more for the undertakings of the Water Companies by reason of their opposition to the proposals of the late Lord Beaconsfield, who had so dealt with the question as to have made it possible for the undertakings to be purchased for some £33,000,000. On behalf of the district which he represented he entered an emphatic protest against people being put to the cost of appearing before a Committee upstairs, and opposing by counsel and witnesses a Bill which had been framed to carry out what was described as a statutory obligation. He represented the Ealing Division in part of which, viz., South Acton, almost the only industry was the washing of clothes for the West End of London. There were in that area 266 properties which were assessed for laundry purposes. If this Bill passed the interests of the laundry proprietors would be seriously affected, because the water supply would be liable to be cut off without notice or without any adequate notice or means being available for an alternative supply. Besides the places to which he had referred, there were an enormous number of laundries carried on in dwelling-houses which had the ordinary water supply. Apart from that aspect of the question there were upwards of 17,000 houses in the Ealing Division whose assessments were £30 and under, whose water charges would be increased under the Bill. He did not think the House should assent to a proposal which would be a gigantic means of professional employment if the Bill went upstairs. There was no necessity to pass the Bill in the particular form proposed to enable the Water Board to carry out the statutory obligation imposed by the Act of 1902.

*MR. MORTON (Sutherland) said the difficulty in connection with sending the Bill upstairs was the immense expense which would be involved, amounting probably to thousands of pounds. That might suit agents and lawyers, but it did not suit the ratepayers. Although the Water Board was obliged in honour to bring forward the Bill with the view of carrying out the obligation imposed, Parliament was not obliged to accept it. Besides the City of London, there were other districts which would be injuriously affected by the Bill. The City, of course, would be hardest hit. He therefore hoped that those who did not like the Corporation of the City of London would have some consideration for the citizens who had always been treated badly in regard to the charge for water. As long ago as 1870, the late Lord Goschen, then Mr. Goschen, brought in a Bill which settled the quinquennial valuation and affected the City very much, and he promised a committee of the Corporation that the City would not be injuriously affected by it in regard to water rates. No provision, however, was made to protect the citizens of London against unfair water rates, and for the last twenty or thirty years the City of London had been paying between £70,000 and £80,000 for water which they had never got at all. It was not fair to business men in the City that because they were obliged to pay high rents for their premises they should also be made to pay for water that they did not get. A Bill was introduced some years ago to provide for a supply of water by meter, but it was defeated by the combined efforts of vested interests. That Bill applied not to the City alone, but to all London, and if the vested interests had been defeated the result would have been that the water might have been purchased at less than one half of the cost; say a saving of at least £20,000,000 to the people of London. He quite agreed that there must be a special rate for water at high pressure for fire extinction purposes; but it should be remembered that the City had spent £40,000 in putting down hydrants. He was sorry to oppose the Water Board in any way, but as they would not give the citizens an undertaking that they would be protected from unjust and unfair charges for water, there was nothing left for them to do but to oppose the Bill now before the House.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 219; Noes, 44. (Division List No. 31.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.

Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, SirJ.H(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner, RtHnSirJT.(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Clarke, C. Goddard
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cullinan, J.
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H(St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Emmott, Alfred
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Samuel T.
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Col. Alan (Hereford, S.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hn. Richard B.
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J. Keir (MerthyrTydvil
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R.L(Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hooper, A. G.
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A.Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal,E.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon,N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Seaverns, J. H.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hn. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soares, Ernest J.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strachey, Sir Edward
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, DavidAlfred (Merthyr
Tillett, Louis John
Toulmin, George
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds,S.)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W.Dudley(Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney
Watt, H. Anderson
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, RtHn.SirAlex.F
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beach, Hn.Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn.Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark,Gov'n
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Hervey,F.W.F.(BuryS.Edm'ds
Hills, J. W.
Hyde, Clarendon
Lane-Fox, G. R.
M'Micking, Major G.
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nicholson, Wm.G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, HerbertPike(Darlington
Rawlinson, JohnFrederick Peel
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W.Mitchell- (Lanark
Valentia, Viscount
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Dixon - Hartland and Mr. Ernest Lamb.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

SUPPLY (ARMY ESTIMATES).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £9,835,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the pay, etc., of His Majesty's Army (including Army Reserve) at home and abroad (exclusive of India), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908," resumed.

Question again proposed.

MR. J. WARD, continuing his speech, thought those Members of the House who, like himself, were in favour of considerable reduction of Army expenditure ought to offer fair criticism upon the present proposals and point out what weak spots there might be, no matter what their views were about peace and war. He did not suppose that there was anybody in the House who did not consider war a hideous method of settling international disputes. They would all like some other method of settling matters, but at present they were not in that position, and therefore he thought that the proposed policy should be carefully considered. He wanted to be very certain first of all that we should maintain the voluntary principle under the new scheme for a new territorial Army. If he had the slightest suspicion that it was intended to be used as a lever for compulsory service or would make compulsory service easier, it would receive his unstinted hostility. He wished to allude to one or two matters from a different standpoint from that from which they had up to now been dealt with. The position of the common soldier under the new organisation had not been stated to the Committee. If none of the grievances of which he complained were to be removed, mere expressions of sympathy were of no importance to the rank and file. They were like so much thin smoke. The Secretary of State had told them that there was a great shortage of officers required for present service, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman said that when his present scheme was introduced there would be a leeway of 10,000 officers to be made up in some way or another. The right hon. Gentleman had forgotten one important source from which he could obtain officers for a national democratic Army. He had thought of the public schools, the universities, and everything except the non-commissioned officers—the men who had already shown the necessary ability in the Army to become non-commissioned officers. The quality of recruits that would be got depended upon the opportunities offered to those recruits. He himself had been through a campaign as one of the rank and file, and he knew the opinions of the best of the rank and file and the best of the non-commissioned officers he had come across. If we were to have a successful national Army there must be opportunities given to the rank and file to obtain commissions. In the French army, he believed, a definite percentage of appointments were set aside for those who had passed through the ranks. Those who were qualified ought to be given the opportunity of rising. It would solve the officer problem, do away with much snobbishness in the Army, and attract the best class of men—men with foresight and ability. They would never escape the snobbery of the Army until the men who started at the bottom of the ladder were given the opportunity of reaching the top. A definite percentage of commissions should be set aside for men who showed the ability to obtain them, and an opportunity should be given at the depots for men who had become officers to educate themselves. If that were done many of the problems would be solved. That was his suggestion as one who had been through the mill, and he offered it to the Committee for what it was worth.

*MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) said that from the speech of the hon. Member for Salford one could appreciate the difficulties in which the right hon. Gentleman was placed. He had to try and please two sets of people, one section of the House which desired to have no Army at all, or an Army as small as it could possibly be made, and the other which desired to have an Army sufficiently strong to perform the duty that fell upon it in the exigencies of our great Empire. The desire of the Committee was to remove this discussion as much as possible from the arena of Party politics, and so far as he was concerned he could only express his regret that the Secretary of State had not taken the Committee a little further into his confidence. He would have liked the right hon. Gentleman to have told them what were the exact proposals of his military advisers at the War Office, and what were the particular restrictions that he had placed upon those proposals. They were unable to reconcile the right hon. Gentleman's statement that this was a soldiers' proposal with the suggestion that the standing Army should be reduced by 16,000 men. The right hon. Gentleman ought to have stated the particular reasons which guided the Army Council and himself in arriving at the decision to reduce the Army when only a few years ago it was considered essential that larger numbers should be maintained to preserve the interests and the prestige of the Empire throughout the world. As a Militia officer he could not but express his regret at the proposal to do away with that force. Both the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for the Colonies had expressed their regret at the disappearance of that old constitutional force of the country, and in a small degree voiced their approval of the services it had rendered in the past. But the Militia forces would be much more grateful to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition for his appreciation that afternoon of the services which they had performed in past years. Before the Government proposed to do away with an old constitutional force of that kind they ought to make every possible attempt to keep it under its present name, even if it was necessary to reorganise it in some degree. For no one could forget the services the Militia rendered during the South African war, when it not only took the place of the line battalions in garrisoning the towns in this country, Scotland and Ireland, but numerous battalions rendered valuable service on the lines of communication in South Africa, at Mediterranean stations like Malta, and in looking after Boer prisoners in islands like St. Helena and Ceylon. Every Militiaman admitted that the force was not in a satisfactory condition at the present moment, and they had only to refer to the figures which the right hon. Gentleman had given to the House on Monday last. At the present moment they were 37,000 men under strength, and the officers were 1,000 short. Besides, out of 130 battalions, forty-six battalions were 500 under strength. Would it not be better to try and reorganise the force, and make it as efficient as possible as a fighting force? The unfortunate part about the Militia was that the force had always been drained for the purpose of the standing Army. The Militia, the right hon. Gentleman had told them, furnished about 12,000 recruits a year for the line, which could not be got without the Militia. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies had stated that it had been asserted that the number of recruits required for the Army a few years ago was something over 40,000 a year, and that the number now required was only 22,000. As the Militia alone furnished 12,000, he would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be better to dispense altogether with the recruits got from the Militia for the line, and to keep the Militia a unit of its own. There were various ways in which the Militia could be reorganised and made an efficient force, and perhaps it could be maintained on a cheaper basis than at the present moment. To his mind the fault of the Militia was that there were too many units, and these units had only a small number of men. In his own county of Gloucester there were two battalions of Militia, both under strength, one having about 500 men instead of 600; and the other battalion was lamentably deficient in strength. Would it not be an advantageous and economical method to make the two battalions into one, and thus save half the staff? Then there was the question of training the recruits. The right hon. Gentleman had tried the experiment of training recruits in the winter months, and it had been very successful. He could refer to another fresh experiment, that of training the recruits at the battalion depot. That had met with very great success, and he could only say in regard to his own battalion that it had had a very good effect, and they had obtained far more recruits than for many years past. Then there was the question of the supply of officers. He would have thought that it might be possible to make it a condition on officers of the Line passing into the Reserve that they should train with the Militia for a few years, a plan which would be of great advantage to that force. In regard to training, a month was not sufficient, because a great part of it was taken up with musketry drill. He suggested that it might be possible to give the men the musketry practice at some time outside the month set apart for training. He thought that might be accomplished with local aid, if the War Office would give an additional grant for rifle ranges. Under the present scheme the Militia was to disappear, and in its place they were to have this special contingent, which apparently was to serve two purposes. One portion was to provide drafts for the Regular Army when war broke out, and another portion was to go into the territorial Army, and apparently to go out when the territorial Army was embodied and put into training for six months. In the first case they were only to be called upon for fifteen days training in the year, six of which would be for musketry, leaving only nine days.

MR. HALDANE: There will be six days in addition.

*MR. HICKS BEACH said that made twenty-one days (the Militia had now twenty-eight), including two Sundays, two days for entering and leaving camp, and one day for inspection. That did not leave very much time for training, and he failed to see that this force would be a bit better trained than the existing Militia. If they had a large number of soldiers only seventeen years of age with six months' training they would not be fit to take the place of the Regular Army in foreign countries for a period of two or three years. There were to be seventy-four battalions of these men, 500 strong, and that was a very small force from which to supply drafts for the Line in time of war. They had been told that 12,000 recruits came from the Militia into the Line. He would like to know what was going to happen in future if the Militiamen who in the past had gone into the Line were going to be used to form the special contingents at the depots? Where was the right hon. Gentleman going to get his 12,000 recruits? As to the Territorial Army he only hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be successful in obtaining it. Unfortunately there was a certain amount of jealousy between the different branches of the Auxiliary Forces. The Yeomanry looked down upon the Militia as an inferior class, the Militia looked down upon the Volunteers, and some Volunteers looked down upon the Militia. If the right hon. Gentleman could get them to work together he would congratulate him, but he had doubts on the matter. At the present moment they had a serious grievance against Ireland, because the Irish Militia were going to be allowed to remain as they were before, the reason being that there were no Volunteers in Ireland. The fortunate Irish Militia were to be enrolled to go abroad, and they were to be embodied in their unit and kept as Militia. He only wished the right hon. Gentleman would do the same thing for the English Militia. A Militia trained under its own officers was a far more efficient fighting force than the special contingents trained under officers whom the recruits would never see in time of war. But if it was the final will of the country that the Militia were to be abolished he believed they were sufficiently patriotic to give up all their old traditions which they valued so much and pass into the special contingents of the territorial Army. No satisfactory answer, though, had yet been given to the question when the territorial Army were to be called out for six months training. Were they to be called out on the outbreak of war, or only when there was a real national emergency, and a danger of these islands being invaded? If the former, he very much doubted if men would join in anything like the numbers that the Volunteers were enrolled at the present day. The hon. Member for Merthyr had criticised severely some of the right hon. Gentleman's proposals, and had prophesied that the influence of trade unions would be used against them. He was sorry to hear that, because if the territorial Army was to be real it must be brought about by the co-operation of the employers and the representatives of the workmen. The hon. Member for Stoke had complained that the private soldier had no opportunity of rising to a high rank in his profession but he would point out that the real obstacle to this was the inadequacy of an officer's pay; and he would like to have the co-operation of the hon. Member and his colleagues in asking the Secretary of State for War to increase the pensions of quartermasters in the Army. If they served ten years they were entitled to a pension of £200 and the honorary rank of captain, but if they served another ten or twelve years and got the rank of major, they retired on the same pension. He thought it was important that a man who had risen from the ranks should not be treated in this way. A man who had risen by his own work and devotion to duty, should, he thought, get a little more consideration than another who had not served for so long a period. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil had complained very much that a considerable amount of favouritism was shown in regard to the getting of employment for men who had served in the Army and Navy. He did not share the views of the hon. Member. He thought that men who had served their country and risked their lives in the Army or Navy had a greater demand on the kindness of their fellow citizens and ought to have a certain advantage in obtaining employment over those who had not risked their skin in the service of the country. If they did not encourage the private soldier by holding out to him some chance of getting civil employment when he left the Army, they would be bound in the end to come to that method of military service which hon. Members below the gangway abhorred so much, namely, conscription. He regarded the territorial Army scheme as the last gasp of voluntary service. If the scheme could not be carried out the country must come in a few years time to the Militia ballot or compulsory service.

*MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) wished to dissociate himself very strongly from the remarks which had fallen from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil, and more particularly the remarks in regard to the employment of old soldiers. He was glad that the hon. Member for Stoke took a different line, and he thought it was one with which the House would sympathise. As to the reason why only rich men could hope to rise in the Army, he would say that the state of things complained of was likely to remain so long as the country insisted on officers being men of means. When the country was prepared to pay and when hon. Members ceased to talk so much about economy and thought more of what was right and fair to pay for service to the State, there would be a better chance for all classes to rise in the Army. He congratulated Mr. Haldane upon having abandoned the idea of the territorial Army being controlled by sanitary, gas, and water experts. Apparently they were now to have it managed by those in the county who were military experts and took an interest in military affairs. He thought they would have an easy task; at any rate he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that in his part of the country he would receive the cordial co-operation of all classes. He wished, however, to deal more particularly with the Yeomanry. The Secretary of State for War had said in a light and airy way that they were not going to cut down the Yeomanry, but how did that statement compare with the memorandum he had issued? That memorandum materially altered the conditions of the Yeoman's service. The right hon. Gentleman was taking the one force which was up to strength and admittedly efficient and trying to put it into the position of other branches of the service which were notoriously inefficient, and where there had been considerable difficulty in maintaining full strength. They might say that 5s. 6d. a day was too much to pay, but for hundreds of years the Yeoman received 7s. per day. In 1901 when the conditions were altered 1s. 6d. was taken as the cost of keeping a horse, and that was deducted. When, however, they considered that the 5s. 6d. per day did not represent clear pay, but certain amounts for food, equipment, and clothing, he thought they must agree that it was not an extravagant sum. Was it worth while risking the great ill-feeling which must undoubtedly be caused by the proposed altered conditions? The Yeoman would be distinctly worse off, and the force must suffer as the result of that cheese-paring policy. The right hon. Gentleman asked them to make sacrifices. The Yeomanry were prepared to make sacrifices and to rough it for their country, but they were not prepared to make sacrifices in order to prove what a great economist the right hon. Gentleman was or to redeem the election pledges of his Party. He did not think that the right hon. Gentleman would find, if he appealed to them in that way, as much support as he would if he appealed to them boldly to give up something for the sake of the country. He thought it was only fair that they should have an answer from the right hon. Gentleman as to what allowances for food, clothing, and equipment were to be continued. The question of allowances for horses had been already dealt with. Personally he thought that the £5 should be paid to the commanding officer instead of to individual men, for in many cases the money was wasted. If the money were paid to the commanding officer, a better class of horses would be obtained. The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that this was a soldiers' Budget, but he would like to echo the very true remarks of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, when he said that the soldiers had never shown themselves capable of dealing with the Auxiliary forces. He earnestly hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not be too strongly guided by the opinion of the soldiers. He had a strong feeling that the alterations proposed to be made in respect of the Yeomanry were not justified, and he hoped that on re-consideration the right hon. Gentleman would considerably modify them.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he understood the Government were prepared to assent to an arrangement by which the Bill which practically embodied the scheme of the Secretary of State for War would be taken as the First Order on Monday, and on which, of course, the discussion could be continued. In these circumstances he hoped his hon. friends would raise no objection to the Vote being taken before the House adjourned.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford), called attention to the system of courts-martial. He suggested that the private soldier should be treated in the same way as the officer was treated. When an officer was court-martialled, he was tried by his fellow commissioned officers, and when a private was court-martialled the court ought to be constituted of private soldiers. The prisoner would then receive more sympathetic treatment, and the sentences passed would not be so frightfully cruel as those frequently passed now by a court of officers judging a private who had committed some trifling breach of rules. He wished to associate himself entirely with the remarks of the hon. Member for Salford, and the hon. Member for Stoke, and the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil, especially with regard to the opportunities for a private to rise from the ranks to the highest offices. He considered that every officer ought to pass through the ranks. In that way, and in that way only, would an officer learn thoroughly the work of a private soldier. Such knowledge was of the utmost importance. If that rule were made, then there would be plenty of young men of the best quality applying for enlistment, and there would be a plentiful supply of officers. It had been suggested that in order to get sufficient officers from the ranks it would be necessary to raise the pay of officers, so that an officer could live upon his pay. But men of the working classes could live very well upon the pay of an officer, so that it would be quite unnecessary to raise the pay. He also wished to call attention to the difficulty of getting rifle ranges. These were now often a long way from the town where the volunteers resided. There was some regulation with regard to shooting across a public road, but in the country there were many public roads where the traffic was very slight, and across which shooting might take place without danger, if ordinary precautions were used. He next called attention to the system of compulsory vaccination, which caused great hardship to recruits. Fine promising young men were sometimes killed by it. There were two instances of that last November. In any case, when a soldier had been vaccinated he should be invalided until his arm was well. It had been proved by a medical man of the Metropolitan Asylums Board that on the average a man should be invalided for a week after vaccination before he was fit for manual labour. The Report of the Royal Commission on Vaccination, recorded that 3,953 soldiers were attacked with small pox and 391 of them died from that disease. Those soldiers were all carefully vaccinated. That was an absolute proof that vaccination was useless to protect the men against small pox. He trusted that on this subject the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War, who had shown on so many subjects enlightment and a desire to bring the Army up to date, would not continue an eighteenth century nostrum which was founded on fraud and continued in folly, but would rise to the height of the occasion and put an end for ever to this injurious barbarism.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

POST OFFICE SERVANTS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Nine Members be appointed to inquire into the wages and position of the principal classes of Post Office Servants, and also of the unestablished sub-postmasters.

To examine, so far as may be necessary for the purpose of their Report, the conditions of employment of these classes.

To report whether, having regard to the conditions and prospects of their employment, and, as far as may be, to the standard rate of wages and the position of other classes of workers, the remuneration they receive is adequate or otherwise.

Mr. Barker, Mr. Frank Edwards, Mr. Claude Hay, Sir Clement Hill, Mr. Hobhouse, Mr. Meehan, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. John Ward, and Mr. Wardle were nominated Members of the Select Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Four be the quorum.—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

Adjourned at one minute after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 1st *March*, 1906.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.

For the Borough of Halifax, in the room of John Henry Whitley, esquire, one of the Commissioners for executing the office of Treasurer of the Exchequer of Great Britain and Lord High Treasurer of Ireland.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS].

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the Bills comprised in the List reported by the Chairman of Ways and Means as intended to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with in the following case, viz., Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways.

PETITIONS.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS (IRELAND)

Copy presented, of Emigration Statistics of Ireland for the year 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MOTOR CAR ACTS.

Copy presented, of Regulations made by the Local Government Board under the Motor Car Acts: I. Borough of East Retford; II. Borough of Guildford; III. Borough of Harrogate; IV. County of Westmorland; V. County of West Suffolk (Newmarket) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

MOTOR CAR ACTS.

Copy presented, of Order of the Local Government Board, amending The Motor Car (Registration and Licensing) Order, 1903, relating to the County of London [by Act]; to lie upon Table.

MOTOR CAR ACTS.

Copy presented, of General Order entitled The Heavy Motor Car (Amendment) Order, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC OFFICES (ACQUISITION OF SITE) ACT, 1895, SESSION 2; PUBLIC OFFICES (WESTMINSTER) SITE ACT, 1896; PUBLIC OFFICES (WHITEHALL) SITE ACT, 1897; PUBLIC BUILDINGS EXPENSES ACT, 1898: AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS EXPENSES ACT, 1903.

Account presented, showing the moneys issued out of the Consolidated Fund, the moneys borrowed and the securities created in respect thereof, the disposals of moneys issued to the National Debt Commissioners for temporary investment, and the expenditure, under the provisions of the Acts to the 31st March, 1906; together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 61.]

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.

Copy presented, of Fifty-ninth Report from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England, with an Appendix [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TUBERCULOSIS (HUMAN AND BOVINE) (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Second Interim Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the relations of Human and Animal Tuberculosis. Part II. Appendix. Vol. IV. Histological and Bacteriological Investigations, by Arthur Eastwood, M.D. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MINES AND QUARRIES (WINGATE GRANGE COLLIERY EXPLOSION).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by A. H. Ruegg, Esq., K.C., and J. B. Atkinson, Esq., M.Sc., two of His Majesty's Inspectors of Mines, on the circumstances attending an Explosion which occurred at Wingate Grange

Colliery on the 14th October, 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of Draft Rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Prisons Acts, 1877 and 1898, with respect to the constitution of the Visiting Committee of Bristol Prison [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BUTTER AND MARGARINE BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Enactments applied or adapted by the Butter and Margarine Bill."—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 62.]

RATHMINES AND RATHGAR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Return ordered, "of the following Papers in respect of the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council, viz.:—(1) the Auditor's Reports for the years ending the 31st day of March, 1905, and the 31st day of March, 1906; (2) written objections by ratepayers, Messrs. O'Driscoll, Moran, Rattigan, and Sullivan, to items in the account for the year 1906; (3) Auditor's reasons for decisions in respect of the same; (4) terms of appeal to the Local Government Board by Mr. Sullivan; (5) Local Government Board's decision, No. 54,638, 1906; (6) any correspondence on the matter between the Local Government Board and the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council."—(*Mr. John O'Connor.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Delay in Sale of the O'Donel Estate, County Mayo.

DR. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say how long the O'Donel estate, at Newport, county Mayo, has been in the Court of Chancery, and what is the cause of the delay of the sale of it to the Congested Districts Board or the Estates Commissioners; whether he is aware that the non-sale of this estate has prevented the Congested Districts Board from dividing amongst tenants of uneconomic holdings two adjoining estates which have been purchased by the Board for several years; and would he, in the interests of some of the poorest tenants in Ireland, use his influence with a view to inducing the Judge of the Land Court to sell this estate as quickly as possible.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that the petition for the sale of this estate in the Land Judge's Court was filed in 1893. All the parties to the case are agreed that a sale to the Congested Districts Board would be desirable, and the Land Judge is anxious to have such sale carried out expeditiously. The delay in the matter hitherto has been due to the complexity of the title. The case is to come before the Land Judge during the present month, and in the meantime efforts are being used to obviate the difficulties as to title. The Congested Districts Board have already purchased the tenants' interest in three farms on the estate, and are prepared to purchase the fee simple when it is offered for sale by the Court. It is not the case that the non-sale of this estate has prevented the Board from distributing two adjacent estates. The only adjoining property belonging to the Board is the Jones estate, which has only recently been vested in the Board.

Collections for Presentations to School Teachers.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that last Christmas a subscription was collected from the children attending the Skegby National Schools, Nottinghamshire, by one of the assistant teachers for the purpose of making a presentation to another teacher at this school; will he take steps to prevent money being collected from the children of working men by teachers in council schools for making presents to other teachers; whether he has any information that a parent of one of the children attending the Skegby National Schools protested against this system, and that, arising out of this protest, the child of this parent was publicly spoken to in the school by the wife of the teacher to whom the presentation was made, to the annoyance of the parent and discomfort to the child; and will he issue instructions to the Nottinghamshire County Council that they are not to permit teachers to collect money from children in councils schools.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I have no information with regard to the incidents referred to. The matter appears to be one in which any necessary action should be taken by the local education authority, to whom I am sending a copy of my hon. friend's Question.

Religious Belief of Messenger of Board of Works, Dublin.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will ask the Board of Works, Dublin, to explain why, when a vacancy occurs for a messenger, the secretary of that Department is allowed to use his influence in such a way that no Roman Catholic receives an appointment; and, in view of the fact that the majority of the persons looking for these positions are Roman Catholic Army and Naval pensioners, will he ask the Board of Works to take steps in such appointments to uphold the principle of civil and religious liberty.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) Under Treasury Minute pensioner messengers are nominated by the Admiralty or the War Office upon application by the employing Department to the Civil Service Commissioners. The actual appointment in the Department referred to is made by the Board, who assures me that they have no knowledge of the religious beliefs of their staff. There is, therefore, no foundation for the imputation contained in this Question.

Local Authorities and Religious Instruction.

MR. BARNARD (Kidderminster): To ask the President of the Board of Education if it is intended that the local education authority shall demand the repayment of one-fifteenth of the teachers' salaries in the case of a maintained school (as, for instance, a British school) where the religious instruction is entirely undenominational, *i.e.*, Cowper-Temple, and given only by the teachers, and the management is also undenominational.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Answer is in the negative.

Sergeant P. Cox—Metropolitan Police.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many unfavourable reports, and of what character, were recorded against Sergeant P. Cox, of B Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, prior to his promotion to his present rank.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It would be contrary to practice and subversive of discipline to give any such information as is asked for in the Question. The Chief Commissioner informs me that Sergeant Cox was promoted to his present rank more than two years ago, and has proved to be an efficient officer.

Belfast Police Inquiry.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if it is intended to publish the Report of the Belfast Police Inquiry, and when.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Committee of Inquiry was appointed at the instance of my predecessor with the object of clearing up certain matters in connection with the organisation and discipline of the Belfast police force, and I understand that this object was attained. Mr. Bryce fully considered the question of publishing the Report, and decided that it was not necessary or desirable to publish it.

Royal Irish Constabulary, Employment of Sergeants in Dublin Castle.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how long Sergeants James Campbell and Daniel Herlihy have been employed at the Royal Irish Constabulary office in Dublin Castle; what are their duties; and for what reason are these two officers allowed to retain such positions for an unlimited period, while other sergeants of the reserve force are transferred to the country on completing four years' service at the depot.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Sergeants Campbell and Herlihy have been employed at the Royal Irish Constabulary office since February 1888 and November 1887, respectively. The former is sergeant in charge of the orderlies on duty at the office, and the latter is personal orderly to the Inspector-General. The rule that men are transferred to county stations after serving four years on the reserve at the depot does not apply to men who are attached to the headquarters' office. Such men are selected and retained at the discretion of the Inspector-General.

Irish National Education—Teachers Dismissed for Inefficiency.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say how many teachers were dismissed by the Commissioners of National Education for inefficiency during the year 1906; how many were pronounced unfit to be principals, but were permitted to become assistants; the number who were forced to retire within five years of qualifying for maximum pension, together with the number dismissed by managers during the same year; and the reasons given for these latter dismissals.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that twenty-seven principal teachers were dismissed by them for inefficiency during the year 1906. Of these, seven were pronounced unfit to be principals, but were permitted to become assistants, and eight were, when dismissed, within five years of qualifying for maximum pension. The Commissioners have no sufficient information as to the number of teachers dismissed by managers.

Royal Irish Constabulary—Acting Sergeants at Dublin Depot.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say how many of the Royal Irish Constabulary holding the temporary rank of acting sergeant are at present stationed at the depot in Dublin; if their names are furnished to the Royal Irish Constabulary office in Dublin Castle; on what grounds are junior constables promoted at the depot to the temporary rank of acting sergeant; what is the annual cost of these temporary promotions; and if the system of temporary rank will be extended to deserving constables in country stations.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Twelve men at the depot hold the temporary rank of acting sergeant. The names of the men recommended for this temporary rank are submitted to the Inspector-General, who makes the appointments. The men who are so appointed act as instructors in drill, gymnastics, or swimming, or perform other duties for which special qualifications are required. The annual cost of these temporary promotions is £114 8s. The Inspector-General does not consider it necessary or desirable to extend the system of temporary promotions to men serving in country stations.

Army Recruits in Ireland.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many Army recruits have been obtained in Ireland for the years 1905 and 1906 respectively, specifying separately regular Army and Militia.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The figures are as follows:—

	Year ending 30/9/05.	Year ending 30/9/06.
Regulars - -	3,166	2,739
Militia - -	5,657	4,959

These figures do not include a few men raised at the headquarters of regiments, batteries, etc., stationed in Ireland.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said he need not trouble the House with any very lengthy remarks. The principle of feeding school children was not before the House that day, nor had they before them the question whether public authorities should assist in feeding school children. The House last session discussed that question and decided it in a favourable way, and the Bill, including Scotland as well as England, which was sent to another place, embodied that principle. It was only because of the accident which befel the Bill in the other place that it became his duty that afternoon to move the Second Reading of this measure applicable to Scotland only. The only point before the House was a very narrow one. It was whether the law in regard to the feeding of school children should apply to Scotland or not. The Act of last year was now in force in England and Wales. Were there any special circumstances relating to Scotland which made it undesirable that this law should apply to that part of the United Kingdom? He ventured to say that those who opposed the Bill must confine their remarks exclusively to that point so far as practical business was concerned. The constitutional point involved was very well expressed by the Prime Minister after the Bill of last session was returned to this House in a mutilated form. The right hon. Gentleman made the following pronouncement—

> "This was the strongest case of the inversion of authority of these constitutional matters that they had ever seen. Stronger than the Education Bill, stronger than the Plural Voting Bill, stronger than any was this little thing."

He was going to ask the House to pass the Bill so that the other place might have the opportunity of reconsidering its decision and of giving, as he ventured to think, a much wiser decision than it arrived at last session. Was there need for the Bill in Scotland? Was there any particular feature in Scottish social conditions which made it undesirable for Parliament to apply the Bill to Scotland. The Bill, as the House would remember, was an exceedingly simple one. It said first of all that if there was any doubt about the physical condition of children, it revealed itself in the school. If a teacher saw any good reason for doubting the physical condition of a child, he could make a report, and certain machinery might be put into operation. That had already been tested so far as England was concerned. When the Bill of last year got a Second Reading in this House it went upstairs and was subjected to a careful examination on the part of a Select Committee aided by witnesses from all parts of the country. Unfortunately towards the end the evidence taken from Scotland was a little bit hurried. He thought that the Report of the Select Committee very accurately described the situation when it said that the evidence from Scotland was not so complete as the evidence from England. Those of them who knew Scotland—some of them who were not Scottish Members happened to know Scotland very well—knew absolutely that there was not one single piece of evidence that came from England and which induced the Committee to come to its decision regarding England which could not be produced from Scotland two-fold. He thought the Select Committee was perfectly right in coming to the decision it did, because the Committee assumed that the evidence from England was representative of what might come from Scotland if it had sat for another two months in considering the Bill. What the Select Committee had to do was to take care that the evidence was representative. It was simply sheer waste of time to go on accumulating evidence from other sources. Every Member of the House who followed social questions must be aware of the existence of the very remarkable publication of the Dundee Reform Union in the shape of a report on housing and industrial questions in Dundee. How any one who knew the facts brought forward in that Report, and who had studied the tables published in it, could say that there was not sufficient evidence, as far as Dundee was concerned, for the application of the Act, he did not know; such a person and he must have totally different ideas of what evidence was. In the small compass of that volume alone there was sufficient evidence to justify the House in making the Act applicable to Scotland. Some time after there was an inquiry in Glasgow. In that city fifteen out of seventy-six public schools were made the subject of investigation. The first report showed that 1,363 pupils in the fifteen schools appeared to be underfed. Those figures had been questioned. He had in his possession some of the details of an investigation into those cases. It was discovered that 265 cases of underfeeding were due to want of employment, 114 to insufficient income, sixty-six to illness of parents, or to recent death of parents, eighty-nine to the improvidence of parents, ninety to the intemperance of parents, and fourteen to the desertion of parents. Under the Bill now before the House improvident and intemperate parents who did not provide food for their children could be prosecuted. The officers of the Charity Organisation Society had subjected to a careful scrutiny 440 cases taken from three schools, and in only about forty were the parents condemned by them as being what they called "a bad lot and undeserving." His hon. friend who was going to move that the Bill be read that day six months had an experience of Scottish education which very few of them had. The hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities knew perfectly well the state of the schools in the Highlands. He himself received his education in a country school to which he had to walk two miles. The Bill would be invaluable to children placed under those circumstances, not that they wanted food for nothing, but because they wanted food. He was perfectly certain his hon. friend, however strongly he might feel in regard to the Bill, joined him in hoping that something might be done to meet the special cases of country schools and Highland schools which were so remote from the homes of the people that the children could not go home for a midday meal. They were told that the Scottish Education authorities were not in favour of the Bill. An extraordinary conference held in Edinburgh had been seized upon as a precious morsel by those who were opposing it. As a matter of fact that conference was not representative at all, those who attended it being only entitled to speak for themselves. A most extraordinary circumstance about that conference was that two of the most important school boards in Scotland absolutely declined to take part in it. They were the boards of Glasgow and Aberdeen. After the school board of Glasgow had decided to have nothing to do with the conference pressure was brought to bear from Edinburgh. When the matter came again in a clear and decisive way before the Glasgow Board it was decided by a majority of one to adhere to the decision formerly come to. He hoped hon. Members would not place more reliance on that conference than it deserved. He had to-day presented a petition from Govan Parish Council praying the House to pass the Bill. If there was a poor district in Scotland it was the parish of Govan. It was preeminently such districts which the promoters had in their mind when the Bill was drafted. Govan Parish Council in 1904, before there was much agitation in this House for such a measure as that under discussion, passed a resolution that some Member of the House, when the late Government's Education Bill was before it, should move an Amendment to provide for meals being supplied to children when the necessity for doing so was shown. Moreover, the school boards of Greenock, Govan, and other places were in favour of the Bill. A memorial had been sent by the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, to the Secretary for Scotland praying—

> "That power be given to school boards to secure suitable feeding for the poorer classes of school children who could not otherwise secure the essential basis of education."

The Scottish Trade Union Congress had passed a special resolution in favour of the Bill. The executive of the Scottish Trade Unions had issued a whip in its favour. He could assure hon. Members that when Scotland was deleted from the Bill of last session there was very great disappointment and a considerable amount of indignation on the part of active socialists in Scotland. He hoped the House would give the Bill a Second Reading and allow it to go upstairs. After he had introduced the Bill he was surprised to hear that the Government were contemplating legislation on the same lines. If there was any duplication the promoters of the present Bill were not to blame. The Party with whom he was associated introduced the Bill of last session, and they naturally thought that the House would desire them to complete the work which had been left unfinished at the end of the session. He hoped there would be no obstacles placed in the way of the progress of the Bill. He begged to move.

*MR. WILKIE (Dundee) seconded the Motion. He said he was a Scotsman, though that was not important; but what was important was the fact that he was also a representative of a Scottish industrial centre. He was likewise a member of an English city council, a member of its school board for years until it was abolished, and a member now of its education committee. He stated these facts to show that he had some little experience on both sides of the Border of the question now before the House. Further, the business of his organisation took him to the industrial centres of England, Scotland, Ireland, and abroad. He had never found that there were fewer hungry children in the towns of Scotland than there were in those of England, and therefore it was a great surprise to him when the House of Lords mutilated what he ventured to call one of the best labour Bills of last session. He found from reading the debate which took place in the other House, that noble Lords based their action on the statement that all the Scottish witnesses who gave evidence were against including Scotland in the Bill. A great Parliamentary authority was asserted to have once said, "Name me your Committee and I will forecast its report;" applying this to witnesses, they had only to look at the names of the witnesses from Scotland to know the reason why they did not give evidence in favour of the measure. There was not a single representative from organised labour as a witness. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Why not?"] Echo answered why? He knew not; but the fact remained. During the debate last year it was stated that no public body was in favour of the extension of the Bill to Scotland. His hon. friend who moved the Second Reading of the present Bill had shown that assertion was not correct. He saw the hon. Member for Govan present, and he asserted that if a referendum were taken in that parish it would be almost unanimous in favour of the inclusion of Scotland. Then they had got the support for this Bill of the Scottish Trades Congress representing 250,000 members. The Trade Councils throughout the country had time after time voted in favour of it. The trade organisations had a right to be heard on the question, because they were doing more beneficial work for the sick, the unemployed, for funeral expenses of the poor, and in relieving distress than all the voluntary societies or committees put together. It had been shown that the medical authorities in Scotland were generally in favour of the extension of the Bill to Scotland, and those were the men who came more closely in contact with the seamy side of life amongst the poor and were more entitled to speak on the question than those who attended a committee meeting or two or were members of the Charity Organisation Society. As to the Edinburgh Conference which had been referred to, there were 900 school boards in Scotland and only twenty-nine were represented at it, and the voting was eighteen against the Bill and nine for it, so that the circular issued to hon. Members regarding that Conference was not so conclusive as the writers would have them believe. He had an exhaustive Report from the Dundee Social Union in his own constituency. That Union was not composed of representatives of one class or of the organised workers only, but of people of all classes who were interested in the children of the country, and of the welfare of future generations. They said that—

> "In Dundee at any rate, there must be a large number of children whose health is impaired, and whose development is retarded by insufficient nourishment. We understand that at some of the poorest schools a number of the children are given soup, or rice and milk, or porridge and milk during the winter months, and the expense is partly recovered from the parents and partly defrayed from charitable funds. That is good so far as it goes, but we think that the gravity of the situation disclosed by the Tables demands a more systematic remedy."

And in another passage of that Report it was stated that—

> "Many of the children in the schools derive little benefit from school attendance, because they cannot apply their minds to lessons while their stomachs are empty."

And then the Report went on—

> "It has been said that all this was known before the inquiry, but it is at least open to doubt whether anyone believed that these evils were of such magnitude and extent. The probabilities are that most of the large manufacturing towns will show results not greatly dissimilar, if judged by the same standards."

There was the circular sent to every hon. Member signed by a number of very estimable gentlemen, but not signed by a single representative of the masses of the people. They said that—

> "The Collectivist wing of the Labour Party (in the House) systematically misrepresent the opponents of the Bill as inhuman and un-Christian persons who are opposed to the free feeding of necessitous children—"

And then they went on to say—

> "We, on the contrary, fully recognise the duty of feeding necessitous children,"

Who were "we"? And whose "duty" was it?

> "but we deny that it is the duty of the State to feed all children whether necessitous or not, and we object to put the burden of feeding

> even necessitous children on the education authority.”

That was an absurd contention; they could not have it both ways. He maintained that it was the duty of the people, as a whole, represented by the State—and not a few “we's” to discharge that duty. Even the circular showed the necessity of the extension to Scotland of the principle of feeding necessitous children, because it was admitted that there were thousands of children who could not get the benefit of education unless they were fed. They, however, would leave it to the mere chance of the moment and to the few whose riches were the result of the past labour of others. He had also a circular against the Bill sent him by the “Women's Unionist Association of the West of Scotland, Partick Division.” He happened to know that division very well because he was long a resident there, and he challenged those ladies to go with him through the division to see whether the people as a whole were or were not in favour of the Bill. Moreover, the Bill was permissive. If the fine fairy tales told them were correct, there was no necessity to put the provisions of the Bill in force. He and his friends would be only too glad if the Bill was not needed; but they asserted that it was needed and it was only fair play and justice that it should be extended to Scotland. The struggle of life was becoming more and more onerous, what with the feeding and speeding up of machines, and the introduction of every device known to human ingenuity to take the utmost out of the workers' labour. They ought to see to it that the workers of the future did not start life physically defective. He had had long experience in the matter. It was not so much now-a-days that men were less skilled. It was because of the introduction, by the ingenuity of those very workmen, of machinery and appliances, that less skill was required, and if men got sooner old, it was because of the less stamina, less physical force and less robustness—qualities of which this country used to be so proud. We were fond of boasting about our insularity. He had visited the continents of Europe and America and found that we were lagging behind our foreign competitors. But he saw no reason why that should continue. Of course, he knew that in that Assembly there were high and dry political economists, who rather than endeavour to save valuable lives would allow them to be lost before they would move one hair's-breadth from their own formulæ, just as some prude or Mrs. Grundy would sacrifice a drowning man's life because he was dressed only in nature's garments. As the Prime Minister had said, “Away with such fooling.” Human life and the future prosperity of the country were above all such formulæ. Food for the body came before food for the soul. They wanted this benefit clear of the taint of pauperism and charity. They wanted to keep in the workers of the country that old feeling of independence of which they used to be proud. When a national danger arose and the Government were requiring troops for South Africa, thousands of men were rejected as not fit food even for powder. It was the interest and the duty of the whole people, as represented by the State, to remedy that. The House had been discussing during the past week the best means for providing for national defence. On a previous occasion he had had the opportunity of reminding the Prime Minister, when about to introduce an important measure, that the best method of providing for a real national defence and for the betterment of our country was to improve the social and physical conditions of the people, as a whole; then in the words of “Scotland's ploughman bard” what—

> “ Howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
> As long as a virtuous populace may rise the while,
> And stand, a wall of fire around our much-loved isle.”

He had much pleasure in seconding the Second Reading of this Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read a second time.”

*SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said that he did not apologise to the House for taking up the attitude he now did and had also done last session in regard to this measure. Any serious man in carrying out his own affairs was anxious to consider both sides of any course of action; and he believed it was the duty of the Opposition to take up the same position in political affairs, and to ensure that both aspects of any proposal should be duly weighed. He did not believe that any Member for Scotland would dissent from him when he said that this was a question that required to be regarded from two sides. The time might come when hon. Members below the gangway would be again in the submissive position that they on that side were in now, and the best compliment that he could pay them was that when they were in a small minority they would do as they on that side were doing and would have the courage of their convictions and fight for them. He had just a single word of personal apology to offer in this matter. Following the Lord Advocate several hon. Members had complained of his pessimistic views and the lurid terms in which he had placed them before the House. He was quite aware that on the opposite benches there were hon. Members with the gift of gay persiflage who could deal with even the most serious and gloomy question by the light of their dexterous humour, but they should remember in the height of their plenitude that there were those who did not possess that gift. Gifts were only given to us by nature, and he had got what nature had given him. Dogberry said—

> "To be a well favoured man is a gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature."

He did not aspire to the gifts of fortune, and had only that which nature gave him. He had taken early in life the lesson which Dean Swift had given in one of his letters to a young clergyman. He there said—

> "One of the first pieces of advice that I would give you is, do not essay wit in your discourses. I could give you several reasons for this, but one perhaps is sufficient; it is at least a million to one that you have it not."

He was not prepared to fight against such odds, although hon. Members opposite might be. The main question was whether his views were in the main more pessimistic than those of hon. Members opposite, and was he less prepared with a remedy for serious social evils than they? If he could prove that he had remedies to offer at least as good as theirs and that he did not take such a pessimistic view of the state of the children, that consideration might outweigh any niceties of diction and be more conclusive than if he were prepared to outline them with the gay rhetoric and the exhilarating diction of the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Advocate himself. Hon. Members took the view that the children of the nation were lacking food and starving, and they were prepared to deal with that position. But did they consider that that was not the only evil they had to deal with? The condition of the children in the schools during the thirty-five years which had elapsed since the passing of the Education Act of 1872 had vastly improved. Many who were neglected and overlooked prior to that time were now receiving care and attention. He was perfectly certain that behind the minor difficulty of lack of food there lay a far greater evil in the ignorance of sanitation and its laws, overcrowding, and social conditions in our great manufacturing centres which told against life and social welfare far more seriously. They did not sufficiently employ the great scientific implements they had at hand in order to check the condition of things. He treated the evil of lack of food as one of the smallest difficulties with which they were faced. There were far greater evils which lay at the very foundation of the whole question, evils which existed before the children ever came to school and which made them pariahs and outcasts before they had reached the age of five. Neglect was a far more serious matter with the children than the mere lack of food. Lack of food was a lesser evil than the malnutrition due to the neglect to provide suitable food. He considered that the evils arising from these causes were far greater than those arising from want of food. In every large town there were charitable institutions which amply dealt with that question, and, broadly speaking, the facts showed that those organisations were doing a work which was well within their means. One instance in that connection came to his knowledge only the day before, of what was being actually done at the present moment in Glasgow. A charitable organisation, the officials of which assured him that they were able to feed more than they now did, had quite recently gone over ten schools in Glasgow, with an attendance of 10,000 or 11,000 children. They were told that there was great destitution among the children, and through the teachers and other agencies they offered a free breakfast to every child. The largest number who took advantage of this offer was little over 1 per cent., and the number was dwindling, and just now only 100 children out of these 10,000 were taking advantage of that meal. He thought that that was a fair illustration of what charity was doing. Those who were responsible for that charity moreover said that they could do more. They had, they said, resources enough, and failing their present resources they were sure that the springs of charity which would rise to provide free meals for the children were understated. Were they to sweep away the present system in order to establish the remedies which this measure proposed? What did the Bill do? The proposal of the first clause was to give power to the schoolboards to aid school canteen committees in the provision of machinery for affording such meals for children. That was a suggestion which was made by the Royal Commission of which he had the honour of being a member, and with that proposal he fully agreed. The House had now an opportunity of dealing with the matter as a separate Bill for Scotland. School boards in Scotland had in his opinion the power to co-operate with charitable agencies in the matter of providing meals, and he believed they also had the power to provide means of accommodation. They had often done so, and the expenditure had never been disallowed by the Local Government Board in England nor by the Scottish Education Department in Scotland. What the promoters of the Bill were asking for, however, differed entirely from the provisions of the Act in regard to England and Wales. They would give the power, not to the Poor Law authority nor to the parish council, but to the education authority. That was quite different from the English Bill, which gave the power to the local authority comprising both education and Poor Law. [Cries of "No, no!"] Well, at any rate, it comprised large municipal interests. In the case of Scotland the proposal was to vest the power in an authority which was purely educational in character and to ask it to do work which it had never done before and which it had no desire to do. His great objection to the Bill, however, was that it did not impose the responsibility upon the parent, but told him plainly that the sustenance of his children was not to be a duty which rested upon him as a citizen and his failure to perform that duty would not deprive him of the right of citizenship. The result of that would be that in many cases the parent would first look to his own necessities and then to those of his children. Not having enough to provide for both, he would look after himself and then go to the school board and say, "You must feed my children, I have kept myself, but I cannot keep them." If a man had to go to the Poor Law in order to maintain himself he was deprived of the rights of citizenship, but under the Bill he could compel the Poor Law to keep his children and still maintain his rights as a citizen. Was that the example which they wished to hold up to the working man of Scotland? If that was their remedy he, for his part, distinctly repudiated it. They would throw away the resources of charitable effort for a rate to be strictly limited to ½d. in the £, which meant scarcely £50,000 a year. Was that a gift to throw to Scotland in return for checking parental responsibility and local charity? A ra e for a library could be limited, but they would find that they could not limit a rate for the feeding of the children. They would have to meet the needs of the new burden they placed upon the authority and they would not be able to limit it to ½d. in the £. It was for these reasons that he objected to the principle of the Bill. First of all, he thought Scotland ought to have some voice in this matter. It was all very well to take isolated opinions in favour of the Bill, but he had loads of letters from people the names even of whom he did not know supporting the view he took of the Bill of last session. On the other hand he had only two in favour of the Bill. He denied the right of the hon. Member for Dundee to monopolise for himself the leadership of the mass of the working classes in Scotland. He objected to the Bill because he believed the views of Scotland were opposed to it; because he was certain many hon. Members, if they were free to speak their minds, would tell them that they had received from their constituencies remonstrances against the Bill; because he thought that instead of benefiting the youth of Scotland it would inflict grievous injury upon them. He objected to the principles of the Bill for the reason that, instead of using the means they had to hand by the application of scientific methods and resorting to the benevolence of private donors and the preservation of the affection and independence of the parents, they were throwing them all away in order to follow a will o' the wisp and a shibboleth of false Socialism.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Henry Craik.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he made no apology for speaking on a Scottish Bill. He did not oppose the measure simply to assert the right of English Members to speak on all Bills, no matter what portion of the United Kingdom they affected, but purely out of neighbourly feeling for the Scottish people. Unfortunately they, in England, had had the measure of last session thrust upon them, and he wished to save Scotsmen from that evil. That was the reason he opposed the present Bill. The whole weight of evidence in Scotland was opposed to the measure. If, as had been suggested, there was evidence in its favour, why was it not produced before the Select Committee? Every witness before that Committee gave testimony against the Bill. The Labour Party had selected the Bill for support because it was an essential part of their socialistic programme that the State should maintain school children. He was glad that that was not the programme of the Liberal Party. They on the Liberal side did not believe it was the duty of the State to maintain school children or to maintain children at all. The ideal of the Labour Party would be a good one if we were bees or ants, but we were human beings, with human passions and human affections, and socialism must break down because it flew in the face of the deepest instincts of human nature. At the same time he admitted that a good many Liberals had been lured away in response to sentimental cries to support the scheme. The cry had been raised that it was cruel to send little children to school in such a condition of hunger that they were unfit to profit by the education that was given them. He absolutely agreed; but what he insisted upon was that the supporters of the Bill had no right to use that argument in support of this particular remedy. What had to be done was to find out what was the best means of meeting the evil. In his opinion the solution was to be found in so improving the homes that the children might there receive, not only food, but the other attention necessary to fit them for education. Many of the worst evils from which children suffered occurred in the years before they went to school at all. The great evil of infantile mortality was not due to compulsory education. It was due to the fact that many mothers and fathers did not properly discharge their duties. That would not be remedied by feeding children when they went to school. He was glad to see that a Bill providing for the medical inspection of children was to be brought forward. The duty of providing medical inspection for children, with a view to the prevention of disease, was a duty the importance of which few parents had yet appreciated. Therefore, the State might legitimately intervene to set an example. But the duty of parents to feed their children had existed since the world began. Even animals fed their young, and therefore when they found that human beings failed to do what even animals did, it was quite obvious there must be something wrong in the homes. The very first business, therefore, was to find out what was wrong, and to get at that they must go to the homes. In nine out of ten cases it would be found that the evil would not be touched by giving one or even two meals a day at school, because mischief was going on at home. The remedy was to see that the homes were healthy and wholesome.

To reform the home itself was infinitely better than taking the child away and bringing it up in a great barrack. To give meals in the schools would be to break up the homes, because parents would be relieved of one of their primary obligations. The obligation resting on every father to provide food for his children was one of the things which kept the man straight. When it was said that there was no money for feeding children he was reminded of the fact that not less than £150,000,000 a year was spent on drink. A good many advocates of socialistic schemes had not sufficiently realised that social reform was impossible without moral reform. Care must be taken that in making legislative changes they were encouraging a higher and not a lower moral standard. They must call out the best and not the worst in the people. There were many ways in which the Legislature could interfere to give the individual better opportunities for the development of his higher qualities. That was the Liberal ideal, but the Socialist ideal was to relieve the individual of his natural responsibilities so that he might have more money to spend on pleasure. Let the House consider the amount of money spent on trips and on cheap music halls. Many young children of the poorer class were allowed to go night after night to the music hall, and spent twopence or fourpence for seats; and he had no doubt these would be the very first to come forward and claim free meals. The ideal of the Labour Party appeared to be "for everybody to live without working, and for us all to live on one another's rates and taxes." That, he was glad to say, was not the Liberal ideal. The Liberal ideal was to raise the individual to a higher plane, to enlarge his liberties, to widen his opportunities, and to give even to those who were born in the lowest ranks a chance of tasting the higher joys of life, and a chance of contributing to the further greatness of the great nation to which they all belonged.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.) said he need not tell hon. Members that since he became a Member of the House and for many years before he had taken a very great interest in this matter. He, therefore, hoped his intervention would not be considered impertinent, although he was not a Scotsman, nor was he a Scottish Member. While he admired the great courage of the hon. Member for Preston, he did not think he was entitled to speak on behalf of what were Liberal ideals, when it was remembered that he had systematically voted against the Government on all such questions. On the question of the feeding of hungry children and the condition of the poor children in the great cities the hon. Member, who volunteered evidence before the Committee which considered the question, admitted that he did not speak from experience of children, but from theory. The first question of the hon. Member was—

> "You are Member for Preston, I think?—Yes.
>
> "Have you any experience of the Schools in Preston? Very little.
>
> "You have never examined the cases of hungry children in connection with them there?—No.
>
> "Have you anywhere had experience in connection with the children in these schools?—No I do not speak from experience of children."

Later on the hon. Member said—

> "I am not speaking from experience, I am speaking if you like from theory;"

and further he was asked at Question 3747—

> "You have had very little experience in elementary schools in Preston or anywhere else?—I might say I have no personal experi- of elementary schools."

Therefore, he did not put it unkindly, but he could not permit the hon. Member's claim to speak from anything in the nature of practical experience on this important question.

MR. HAROLD COX: I did not make any such claim.

*DR. MACNAMARA said he did not wish to put it unkindly, but he thought that fact must discount the weight of the arguments of the hon. Member. It was a remarkable fact that the whole movement for empowering local education authorities to make provision for the feeding of hungry children, without economic abuse or in any way undermining parental responsibility, which the House did last December, was really initiated in Scotland. The Royal Commission on Physical Training in Scotland in 1893 was appointed on a very narrow reference. It was appointed to inquire into the opportunities for physical training now available in the State-aided schools and other educational institutions of Scotland, and to suggest a means by which such training might be made to conduce to the welfare of the pupils. Outside that it was not to go. What was the remarkable conclusion to which the Commission came? It was this—

> "We think that an obligation for the proper supervision of those who come for instruction should be regarded as one of the duties of school authorities and that teachers should be instructed to take note of all children apparently ill-fed. Unless children receive sufficient nourishment they cannot be expected to profit by the mental or physical training provided for them."

Then there was the Report of the Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1904, and the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on medical inspection and the feeding of school children by voluntary aid, and the Resolution of the House on 18th April, 1905, which at the instance of Sir Bamford Slack said—

> "That in the opinion of this House Local Education Authorities should be empowered (as unanimously recommended by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, 1904) to make provision under such regulations and conditions as they may decide for insuring that all children at any public elementary school in their area shall receive proper nourishment before being subjected to mental or physical instruction and for recovering the cost where expedient from the parents or guardians."

On that a remarkable discussion took place, and Sir George Bartley moved as an Amendment that the meals should be provided under the Poor Law by the guardians. That Amendment was rejected by 100 to 64. The main objection to last year's Bill from Scotland was not on the merits of the case, but because the educational authorities there claimed that they were not the proper persons to carry out the work; the question was not whether it was needed or not, but that education money, so called, ought not to be spent on that purpose. In this House it was determined, as he had just said, that the education authority and not the board of guardians were to provide the food. The suggestion that it should be provided by the board of guardians was rejected by 100 to 64 votes. The hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities had said that the Committee did not call many Scottish witnesses. The hon. Member was a member of the Committee, and he could have asked for further evidence.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: I was quite satisfied with the witnesses who were called.

*DR. MACNAMARA: Then the hon. Gentleman admitted that they got enough Scottish evidence. He thought his case was that sufficient evidence was not called from Scotland.

MR KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) said some witnesses tendered their evidence in favour of the Bill, but were not accepted by the Committee owing to lack of time.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK said that the Committee had not come to any decision to refuse to hear further witnesses. They were not consulted on the subject.

*DR. MACNAMARA said he believed that to be quite true. When the Bill was sent down to this House on 6th, 7th, and 13th December, they had three very lengthy sittings, and all the Amendments put down by hon. Members opposite were rejected by, roughly, a majority of 250 to 30, and when the particular Amendment rendered it necessary to proceed with this Bill to-day was taken its fate was the most unhappy of all. On the proposal to strike out Clause 7 being moved it was discussed, and the House proceeded to a division. Mr. Speaker said he thought the Ayes had it, but his decision was again challenged, whereupon Mr. Speaker said it appeared to him that the division was frivolously claimed, and he asked hon. Members to stand up in their places, and hon. Members who challenged the decision to the number only of thirteen stood up and Mr. Speaker decided that the Ayes had it. In another place Clause 7 was moved to be struck out, and in a House of forty-seven Peers twenty-eight voted to omit it. He had the greatest respect for the Peers, of course; but he did not think a House of forty-seven was sufficient to upset the result of the long and tedious deliberations of this House on the subject. The question they were determining was whether or not the principle of the Bill which had been generally accepted was needed in Scotland. The Royal Commission on Physical Training in Scotland had collected most weighty evidence in regard to the condition of the children. He would like to read some of the evidence. Mr. G. W. Alexander, M.A., clerk to the School Board of Glasgow, was questioned by Sir Thomas Coats—

> "You said that in one school the head master thought very little advantage was got from physical training, because the children were ill-fed and ill-clothed; would that fact apply to more than one of your schools?"—"Yes; and the curious thing is that in one or two similar schools the head masters think that the physical training is all the more necessary because of that fact."

The head master of the Portree public school said—

> "The majority of the children are well-fed; but one cannot fail to notice from the pinched faces of a number of them that considerable poverty prevails."

Miss Flora Stevenson, whose memory he revered, and who had done a great work for education, in her evidence said that when she was Chairman of the Edinburgh School Board, the great difficulty with which they had to deal was the physical condition of the children, who were "half-starved and ill-clad." That was Miss Flora Stevenson's deliberate conclusion. The evidence given before that Royal Commission justified the hon. Member in asking for the Second Reading of the Bill. Reference had been made to a circular which had been issued. It set forth that if the Bill were applied to Scotland it would do "serious injury." He could not see how. They could take it or leave it, for it was purely a domestic matter; and how it could harm Scotland was beyond his comprehension. It had been said, and this was partly the case made against the supporters of the Bill, that the measure was promoted by the Collectivist wing of the Labour Party. He was sure his hon. friend did not know the whole of the facts as regarded the action which had been taken. For six years Sir John Gorst himself, and the Member for Hoxton, who certainly could not be considered a Member of the Collectivist wing, and many hon. Members on both sides, notably his hon. friend the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigan, who had always taken a warm and active interest in this matter, and who, also, was not a Member of the Collectivist wing of the Labour party, had all done their best by private Motion and by drafting a Bill to push the question forward. That had been done long before there was a separate Labour Party in the House. They were unsuccessful in the ballot; but they got one night on the Private Members' ballot, and they brought the matter forward. They were very grateful to those who took interest in education who had taken up this movement and conducted it to the point of getting the matter before the House and carrying it forward to Second Reading. It was not true that the movement had been initiated in that House by the Collectivist wing of the Labour Party. It had been carried forward by men of warm heart, and of all Parties; and it was being carried along to-day by men of warm heart on lines which would not infringe economic principles nor undermine parental responsibility. It was said that the proposal would strike a blow at parental responsibility, family life, and individual character. He had traversed that statement so many times that he need not go over the ground again. He contended, and he was profoundly convinced of it, that it was the charitable method, where they had no means of following up those responsible, which was emasculating parental responsibility. A system such as was now proposed would afford a ready means to make the parent pay if he was able to pay; and, of course, a person suffering from misfortune or illness would be in no sense pauperised by the provision of meals for his children. Indeed, he contended that the principle which he supported would afford a means of developing the sense of parental responsibility. He did not pretend to be acquainted with the Scottish point of view, but he had discussed the subject for many years; he had gone into many Scottish schools, and he knew a fair amount about Scottish education. He readily admitted that a deep sense of proud independent self-reliance filled the Scottish breast, and he hoped it would always be a great asset of the Empire; but he did not think it was by way of being a national insult to suggest that a Bill of this sort should be passed for Scotland. In any case, no locality need apply it if it did not wish to do so; and if the Scottish sense of pride and self-reliance caused every child in Scotland to be carefully nurtured, in order that this scheme might be rendered unnecessary, no one would be better pleased than himself and the hon. Member who had moved the Second Reading, which he would do his best to assist him in securing that afternoon.

*MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) supported the proposal of the hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities. If, as had been said, there was a considerable belief in Home Rule for Scotland, then he submitted that it was only reasonable that they should ascertain what was Scottish opinion on this subject before they proceeded to take action. It was said that in Scotland they had practical independence of character and self-reliance, and they were most anxious, whatever arrangements were made in regard to social conditions, to preserve that independence of character. So far as his experience of Scotland went, all he could say was that the Scottish people did not want to be pauperised, though he admitted that there was a section who did not value that spirit of independence, but spent their money in a way which prevented the proper discharge of their parental obligations. There were some, he was sorry to say, who were earning a wage of perhaps several pounds a week, who devoted such a portion of their earnings to drink and other objects as was inconsistent with proper regard for their own families. He thought they must all admit that the first principle was that the child must be fed, and could not receive instruction properly unless it was fed: secondly, that they must deal drastically with the defaulting parent. Nevertheless, it was only fair, while recognising those principles, that they should ascertain the opinion of the Scottish people on this matter. The Secretary to the Local Government Board, who was then sitting in solitary responsibility on the Treasury Bench, had described, in sympathetic terms, the condition of some of these poor children; but while they sought to improve their surroundings and physical condition, let them take care that they did not do anything which would affect the sense of parental responsibility. Let them take care that the State did not provide for the community a silver spoon which would lead in the end to parents, and their children after them, not exercising their faculties, but living as in an ant hill, or other collection of lower animals, without the aspirations which characterised humanity.

MR. FINDLAY (Lanarkshire, N.E.) said he desired to express the feeling he entertained upon this most intricate question, from the point of view which he had heard expressed by members of school boards in Scotland. There was a very strong feeling in Scotland that sufficient voluntary means existed to deal with the question in its entirety; and there was also a feeling that Scottish sentiment was decidedly against anything which would tend to weaken the parental sense of duty and responsibility, or to pauperism, by releasing parents from the duty of looking after their children. They all realised the difficulties that surrounded the question, and they all agreed that everything that could be done to assist young children to the possession of healthy minds and healthy bodies ought to be encouraged, and every means adapted to that end taken. But he had a very strong opinion, which he wished to see emphasised in every way possible, that the responsibility of the home should be conserved as necessary to the future well-being of the nation. It was a melancholy fact that the method of the upbringing of children in many homes was responsible for much that occurred. Temptations in the way of the working classes should be lessened as much as possible, and parental responsibility developed in every way. He supported the Bill because it was permissive. It did not stipulate that anything must be done, but laid down that certain things might be done if needed. Although he had the greatest sympathy with those who were afraid of widening the area of pauperism and lessening parental responsibility, he could not see that there was any serious objection to the Bill now before the House. At the present time a great many things were weakening self-reliance and destroying the homes of the poor, and they ought to do everything they could to make it easier for them to do right and more difficult to do wrong. It would be a great help if those connected with the work of the churches, school boards, and other public bodies interested in the well-being of the young people, would get more into touch with the homes of the poor. Whilst he fully recognised the dangers which had been alluded to, he thought the Bill contained provisions which ought to be encouraged. Therefore he would support the Second Reading.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) did not think the Socialistic standpoint had much to do with the question. He had taken the most intense interest in this subject for many years, and he was able to look at one or two proposals in the Bill from the point of view of actual practical work. He agreed with the mover that the feeding of children was most required in the country districts, and not in the towns. He thought every country district ought to have its provision for meals in the shape of a kitchen, at any rate during some portion of the year. That was his experience of the matter in Scotland. Personally he would like to see the first clause made obligatory on the school boards. It had been said that school boards already possessed these powers, but there seemed to be a good deal of doubt upon the point, and although it was true that the Scottish Education Department had never put any obstacles in the way of providing such meals, yet they had never gone the length of issuing a circular in favour of them. In most cases in Scotland at the present time provision for meals for the children was made by voluntary arrangements. If the facilities included in this measure had been provided before much greater progress would have been made by this time. His experience was that wherever they had started centres for these meals by voluntary agencies there had been no financial difficulties whatever. In one parish the meals were supplied free, although he did not think that was a good system. In other parishes with which he was connected, fees were charged which practically covered the expense, and there had never been the slightest difficulty in working out the scheme. In the past, school boards had been very slack in the matter. The providing of meals in the way proposed not only enabled them to feed the hungry children, but it also provided them with an excellent training in domestic economy. The trouble was not so much the lack of food as the misuse of it and bad cooking. In times of serious trade depression in the large towns of Scotland it was absolutely necessary to make provision for the feeding of children, and he did not think that the evil was one which could be met by the machinery already in existence. As regarded resorting to the rates, he did not take a very strong view upon that point, although he was rather opposed to rate-aid. He yielded to no man in regard to the great importance of the question. They were now discussing only a small part of an immense subject. The difficulty was that there would be a great reluctance on the part of education authorities to putting an Act of this kind into operation. That applied not only to the education authorities, but to those who elected them as well. Therefore they had to meet the lukewarmness, not only of the education authorities themselves but also of the ratepayers, who would be very slow to avail themselves of the advantages of the Act. He was afraid the Bill would be a discouragement to voluntary effort, although it might be encouraged by the compulsory provision of the necessary equipment for providing the meals. As long as the system worked under a voluntary arrangement it would be preferable, but if it was a question of the rates as against charitable institutions, he would be in favour of using the rates. If the system could be worked apart from free meals he thought it ought to be so worked. He would not deal now with the question of parental responsibility, because he was in hopes that the Government would deal with that subject in their Education Bill. He would, however, like to make it as difficult as possible for the school boards to avoid appointing a committee to deal with the important question of the feeding of the children.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that no doubt he would be attacked for venturing to intervene in a Scottish debate, but he claimed as much right to express his opinion upon a Scottish measure as Scottish Members had to speak upon English Bills. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs said he would like to make the first clause of the Bill compulsory. He would point out to the hon. Member that the general tendency would be to make the Bill compulsory. It would first be adopted by one or two school boards, and afterwards great pressure would be brought to bear on other school boards to do the same. Therefore the feeling that the measure was permissive would not be any safeguard, but rather the reverse. The Secretary to the Local Government Board had laid great stress upon a circular to the effect that the Bill had been introduced by the Collectivist wing of the Labour Party, and had said that that was not so. The fact remained that the Bill was so introduced. With regard to the hon. Member's statement that Socialism and Collectivism had nothing to do with the introduction of the Bill, he pointed out that the hon. Member himself, accompanied by Lady Warwick and Sir John Gorst, had visited a school in London out of which great capital was made. His belief was that the warm hearts of the hon. Gentleman and of Sir John Gorst had led them into illusions and mistakes on that celebrated occasion, otherwise they would have come to conclusions exactly the opposite of those which they had formed. Nobody would deny that Lady Warwick was a prominent member of the Party referred to. She was certainly a Collectivist Socialist. She was one of the celebrated trio who had made the present Bill and the Bill of last year possible. Sir John Gorst was an able man, but he held extreme opinions at times, and they could not take him as a man whose common-sense on a matter of this sort ought to be considered as very great. The hon. Member had also said that the hon. Member for Preston was not an exponent of Liberal ideas. He was an exponent of common-sense, and that, he thought, was as good as, if not better than, an exponent of Liberal ideas. He himself agreed that this was not a Party question. It was a question relating to the well-being of the nation. Those who took the view of the hon. Member for Preston and himself were actuated by quite as kind motives towards children as hon. Members who supported the Bill. Their only difference was not as to the end, but as to the method. It had been pointed out that the hon. Member for Preston admitted in his evidence before the Select Committee on last year's Bill that he had had no experience of elementary schools. At any rate the hon. Member had some experience of human nature. Human nature being what it was, the chances were that, if the State provided food for children, a majority of the parents would say that if there was a good thing to be had they would avail themselves of it, and spend in other ways the money which they would otherwise have spent on food for their children. That was a trait of human nature which it did not need experience of elementary schools to verify. The sense of parental responsibility would be weakened, and they should be putting on the State a duty that ought to be put on the parent. The master of one of the large London schools said he was not in favour of the Bill. Besides, medical men had pointed out that what children really suffered from was not so much want of food as insanitary conditions at home, want of clothing, and badly prepared or unsuitable food. The Bill would in no way remedy that state of matters. The hon. Member opposite had stated that when the rejection of Clause 7 in last year's Bill was moved in this House, Mr. Speaker, holding that a division was frivolously claimed, called on Members opposing the clause to stand up. The result was that only thirteen Members stood up. He would like to point out that a considerable number of Members had gone into the "No" Lobby after a division was challenged under the impression that a division would take place in the ordinary course. Those Members were not aware of what was going on in the House at the time the request to stand up was made. He was one of those in the "No" Lobby, and there were several others. The debate had only lasted twenty minutes, and it took place at three o'clock in the morning. A very large number of Members could not be expected to be ready to divide at that hour. Therefore, he did not think that the hon. Gentleman's suggestion really came to very much. If parents who, owing to their unfortunate circumstances, were going to avail themselves of this Bill because they could not afford to provide food for their children, the probability was that they could not clothe them. If such a Bill were passed the natural consequence would be a demand that children should also be clothed at the public expense. Was not that the idea for which the Labour representatives were really striving? Their idea was that children should be maintained by the State, and if this measure were passed the rest would follow. [AN HON. MEMBER "Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member cheered that; he admitted that it was the logical consequence. That was practically what the Collectivist wing of the Radical Party desired. A large number of Members on the Opposition side of the House, and some Members on the other side, including the hon. Member for Preston, strenuously opposed the Bill which was passed for England last year. Would it not be well to wait for two or three years and see whether the prognostications of those who opposed that measure were or were not correct.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said the conditions in Scotland were different.

SIR F. BANBURY said he was glad to hear that. He regarded the hon. Member as a great authority on all Scottish matters. If the conditions prevailing in Scotland were different, he claimed the hon. Member to vote with him against the Bill. If the hon. Member was correct it was evident that the Bill was not necessary for Scotland. The hon. Member for the Govan division of Lanarkshire had said that the sturdy independence of the Scottish nature would not allow the people to accept a Bill of this sort.

MR. WEIR indicated dissent.

SIR F. BANBURY asked whether the attention of the hon. Member had been called to a circular issued by the Edinburgh School Board, stating that at a conference the representatives of all the large school boards in Scotland, except Glasgow and Aberdeen, and of the Scottish School Boards Association, a Resolution was adopted to the effect that Parliament should not pass any legislation which would place the feeding of school children on the rates. The School Boards of Glasgow and Aberdeen preferred to wait for any proposals submitted to Parliament before conferring on the subject. The House was getting into rather a curious position on the question of procedure. They had at the present moment the Bill which had been introduced by the hon. Member for Leicester, and the Government had announced that they intended to introduce a Bill of their own on the subject. He asked the Lord Advocate what the Government intended to do, to introduce their own Bill, or to take up the Bill of the Labour Party. If the Bill were merely brought forward in order to obtain a Second Reading and nothing more, he did not know that it was necessary to offer very strenuous resistance to it; but if the Government intended to give way to hon. Gentleman below the gangway and to put their own Bill in the fire, then strenuous opposition to this Bill was necessary. He had had sent to him a Memorandum which he presumed had also been sent to other Members of the House; there were four pages of signatures to it by people in Scotland connected with various forms of philanthropic work, including representatives of the Association for improving the Condition of the Poor in Perth and neighbourhood, the Perth Girls' School of Industry, the Dundee School Children's Free Dinner Fund, the Charity Organisation Society, and the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. One of the paragraphs in the Memorandum was in the following terms—

> "It would strike a blow at parental responsibility, family life, and independence of character, as all indiscriminate doles invariably do, and further, would encourage the collectivist teaching that it is the duty of the State to provide food, clothing, and accommodation for all. In Paris the municipal grant to the *Caisses des Ecoles*, which was £19,200 in 1881, had risen in 1900 to £40,000, and the proportion of meals paid for by parents has steadily declined until in 1903, according to the White Book issued by our Foreign Office, it was only about 25 per cent. of the meals supplied, taking the average of the *cantines scolaires* in all arrondissements of Paris."

That was a very important statement, because it dealt with actual experience. In dealing with the question they were merely advancing theories; they really did not know what the result would be. The Bill passed last year had only been in operation in England to a very small degree. But here was a striking instance in Paris of a similar provision.

DR. MACNAMARA: There is no provision whatever for following up the parent in Paris, the parent is never followed up, and no question is ever asked under any circumstances.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the process of following up the parent under this Bill and the Bill of last session was really a process which some of them believed would be practically null and void. They contended last year that in the first place payment should be demanded from the parent before a child was given food, that the Poor Law guardians should be empowered to provide food, and collect the money. They did so on the ground that the guardians would have some knowledge of the people in question, and that they would have some power to enforce payment. On those points they were beaten, and as the Act of last year stood it was the education authority which had power to compel payment if they thought it right to do so. Clause 2 of the Bill now before the House provided—

"There shall be charged to the parent of every child in respect of every meal furnished to that child under this Act such an amount as may be determined by the school board, and in the event of payment not being made by the parent, it shall be the duty of the board, unless they are satisfied that the parent is unable by reason of circumstances other than his own default to pay the amount, to require the payment of that amount from that parent, and any such amount shall be recoverable as if such amount were a sum or sums of aliment within the meaning of the Civil Imprisonment (Scotland) Act, 1882.

On both sides they were only talking theoretically; they did not know what the Bill would do.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): We do claim to know something of the people in the kingdom of Scotland.

SIR F. BANBURY said he should be the last to say that Scottish Members did not know a great deal. That was not the point in question. The real point was that at present nobody could tell what parents would do in regard to the matter of payment for meals supplied to school children. His own opinion was that the provision as to payment would prove illusory. It would be difficult to enforce. It would be almost impossible to enforce it, because of the complicated forms of procedure which it would entail. The memorandum from which he had already quoted also contained the following:—

"The result of the Local Government Board Order of 1905 was that in Bradford over £1,300 was expended in feeding children, and only £3 was recovered from parents.

To sum up his objections to the Bill, he believed, in the first place, that it was premature, and that the least they could do was to wait two or three years in order to see the effect of the English Act. It could not be urged that there was any very violent hurry, because the children of Scotland had been the most highly educated of any children in the United Kingdom. Then he had endeavoured to show that the Bill would lighten parental responsibility, which he believed, was already inclined to be not as serious as it should be, and anything which tended to lighten that responsibility would be a grave source of injury to the nation. For these reasons he should support the Amendment.

*MR. MALLET (Plymouth) said that the only question really between himself and hon. Gentlemen below the gangway opposite was one of method. It was not whether these children should have food, clothes, boots, and many other necessaries of life, but whether those needs could not be met better by organising personal and individual effort rather than by throwing the duty on any administrative body. His belief was that individual effort could bring to bear an amount of care and attention on the work of supplying meals to children which could not be given by any official body. And it should be remembered that there were many children who suffered from troubles for which breakfasts and dinners were no sufficient cure. The Act passed last year for England laid down two perfectly distinct principles—first, the principle that voluntary effort ought to be organised, and secondly, the principle, which was quite independent and irreconcilable with it, as he thought, that the assistance of the rates should be called in, which, if resorted to, would inevitably kill the voluntary appeal. If they wanted to make efficient and universal the voluntary provision on the subject, they were unlikely to get it if they called in the aid of the rates. He maintained, as he had done last year when the English Bill was being discussed, that the need for rate aid was not proved, and never had been. Charitable funds of sufficient amount were always to be obtained for the purpose when they chose to ask for them. [An HON. MEMBER: "No."] He thought there was no question of that; and the real need of food, though severe and cruel, was not so universal as some persons supposed. The question now was whether they ought to apply the principle of the English Act, which was confessedly experimental, and which was not carried without some misgivings on that side of the House, to Scotland, in face of the strong protest of the educational authorities of that country. His hon. friend had referred to the evidence on the subject. He confessed that with him it was largely a question of evidence, and it was the evidence which convinced him that they ought not, at present at any rate, to give up voluntary schemes as hopeless and fall back in despair upon State aid. The Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Deterioration in Scotland used the strongest language against State aid. The Commissioners were "entirely of opinion" that any provision of meals, even if it were necessary or convenient, should be voluntary, and not by means of State aid. Then there was the draft Report drawn up by the Secretary to the Board of Education, who presided over the Select Committee of last year, which summed up very ably the result of their inquiry. That Report stated that five Scottish witnesses were examined, including members from school boards, and the testimony of all had been unanimous against authorising public expenditure for the feeding of children. He admitted that the Bill was permissive, but why should they pass a Bill enabling the local authorities to do something which they did not intend to do? The school boards of Glasgow and Edinburgh were against the Bill. In Edinburgh the chairman of the school board said that the question had actually been fought at a sort of miniature general election, that he himself had held forty meetings on the subject, and that a regular canvass was made. There was no doubt that the Edinburgh School Board was largely elected to oppose the feeding of school children from the rates. An hon. Member had quoted the work of a lady, Miss Flora Stevenson, whose services to all good public causes in Scotland were enough to blot out the sins of many suffragettes. That lady was given the very rare honour of the presentation of the freedom of the City of Edinburgh for her public work, especially among school children, and she took advantage of that memorable occasion to refer to the subject under discussion. She declared that the danger to be faced was not apathy or indifference, but unwise and indiscriminate zeal, and expressed her profound conviction, founded on many years' study of the question that it would be an evil day if the legislature put on the school boards the duty of providing public funds for the feeling of school children. She knew it was said that the parents would be made to pay for the meals given, but experience had shown the difficulty of recovering money from parents for maintaining their children in industrial schools. She believed in voluntary effort, but that meant more individual work. There was money enough, and more than enough; what was wanted was patient, careful, personal work. He admitted that that was only an individual opinion, although he thought that that testimony ought to carry great weight. He, and those who agreed with him, wanted this big issue as to whether children were to be fed out of the rates or not to be thrashed out thoroughly amongst thinking people, and if the argument in favour of it was fully established, he for one would stand aside. He did not in the meantime wish to see the country drifting into a system of feeding children out of the rates, which must, in his view, inevitably weaken the splendid independence of the Scottish people.

*MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) said that the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London had asked why Scotland could not wait to see how the Act passed for England last year worked. If the hon. Baronet had been a Member for a Scottish constituency, he would have realised, as he had, the intense indignation there was in Scotland that that country had been cut out, at the last moment, of the provisions of the Act last year. He spent a very pleasant fortnight in his constituency during the Christmas vacation, and in every place where he addressed meetings he alluded to the measure and the treatment it had received in the House of Lords, and he could assure the House that the feeling was very strong indeed against the action of the other Chamber, and in favour of the benefit of the Act being extended to Scotland. When the hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities last year moved the rejection of the Bill he could not get a single Scottish Member to support him. The opposition to the Bill came mainly from Englishmen, and he ventured to say that nine-tenths of the Scottish representatives and of the Scottish people were in favour of it. When the hon. Member for Preston told the story about the lady who had a drunken husband, and felt glad that that lady had lived at a time before the English Bill was passed, because the story showed that the husband had still sufficient affection for his children as to bring home some money to feed them, he must remind him that if this Bill were passed for Scotland it would be the duty of school boards to have fathers who neglected to feed their children if they had the means summoned and made to pay—That was the sort of man they hoped to get at by means of this Bill—A good deal was heard about the weakening of parental responsibility, and the bugbear of Socialism was always being trotted out against them. The Bill was a purely premissive one and the school board need not adopt it unless they pleased. Speaking not as a Socialist, but as a Liberal Member, if that was all they meant by Socialism he wished it with all his heart and soul every success.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said that his main object in rising was most emphatically to separate the Unionist and Conservative Party altogether from opposition to the Bill. It was only an act of justice to say that his right hon. friend the Member for the University of Oxford gave last year's Bill the most strenuous and most intelligent support, and he then acted with his right hon. friend. He had some acquaintance with the manufacturing districts, and was quite sure that a Bill on these lines was required in order to meet the wants of the community. Having supported the English Bill he should certainly vote for a measure for Scotland operating in the same direction, if such was the view of Members from Scotland. Events had marched on since the year 1906; at any rate, such had the action of public opinion in reference to giving powers to help the education authorities in their work. Last year both Houses of Parliament had approved of the principle that the educational authorities by medical inspection of the school children, and in other respects, should have regard to their health. He believed that a Bill in that sense would be read a second time that day, and upon that principle public opinion would support the present proposal. There was one remark which he might be permitted to make in regard to the independence of parents. The Bill was divided into three parts. The first put the entire cost of the food on the parents That was a bargain between the parents and the educational authorities. The next part provided that where voluntary funds were wanting, or where the efforts of the parents to provide food failed, then the charge was to be put on the rates. The third part provided that the rate was to be limited to a halfpenny in the £. He thought that if the Bill were to weaken the independence of the people it would be a great social evil; but he believed that the Bill was so drafted that the responsibility of parents was recognised, the rates were amply protected, and the House might safely embark on an experiment which was both wise and generous.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) said he was sure that all who wished the Bill well were grateful to the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigan for his excellent speech. He would not detain the House long, but he desired to add his testimony as to Scottish opinion and the representatives of Scottish constituencies being in favour of this measure. The objections to it seemed to him to be mainly two. In the first place, that in Scotland voluntary effort overtook the whole work and covered the entire ground. He regretted to say that although in Scotland there was as much charity as in any other part of the world it did not nearly meet the requirements and necessities of the case. He was quite certain of that, because he knew it not only from Blue-books and statistics but from his own experience. Dr. Mackenzie, an Inspector of the Local Government Board in Scotland, had embodied the facts in a report which was discreditable to voluntary effort, if it was to be considered as sufficient. His report was to the effect that 50 per cent. of the children were constantly underfed, so that they were unable to be properly taught. Voluntary effort was based upon pity raised by suffering, and charity, therefore, came along too late to avert the crisis. They wanted, however, to avert the crisis, and the Bill was a proposal to step in before it was reached. Every winter in Edinburgh, for two or three months, soup kitchens were kept open, and there some of the school children obtained food. When he visited the place there were over 200 children being fed, and he asked the head teacher, who chanced to come in, what he thought of that sort of thing. The head teacher replied that but for that feeding of the children he would have to close his school, because the children could not learn if they were hungry. He said that he would teach them, say, a piece of poetry in the morning, but they had forgotten it in the afternoon. The soup kitchen, he added, had been open for a few weeks, and it was a pleasure to teach again, whereas it had been a misery to do so before. I showed the inadequacy of voluntary effort if before a soup kitchen was opened it was a misery to teach. It also showed that charity was indiscriminate, because although all these children were fed, not a single question was asked. There was no supervision or control in a feeding establishment such as tha , but the Bill would enable a school board to exercise such supervision and control. It was an attempt to establish a system by means of which the children should be fed under some control. There was nothing dainty about a soup kitchen, which provided children with food which was scrambled for, and such a state of things was not elevating to the child. In the future there would be supervision, and a charge would be made to the parent, whereas no charge was made now. Under the Bill, however, there would be organised inquiry to distinguish between parents who would not and those who could not pay for the meals. An hon. Member had spoken of the independence of the Scottish people, and no doubt a very large class would desire to pay. The principle of the Bill was that an inquiry should be introduced, and that a child who came to school suffering from bad nutrition should be followed to its home by an officer of the Board who would make inquiries. The Inspector would ascertain either that the parent was respectable or that he was not. If he was respectable, and in a position to pay, and did not pay, then he could be taken before the Sheriff's Court, and the Sheriff could give him a term of imprisonment for failing to feed his child. That was excellent, because in the meantime the only institutions that they had for inquiries of that nature, were the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the League of Pity, which had no authority behind them. If, on inquiry, it turned out that the parent was unable to pay, then he would not have to pay. The hon. Member for Preston opposed casting the obligation to provide these meals upon public funds; but he did not think that the hon. Member would say that it was part of the obligation of Parliament to visit the sins of the parents upon the children. The child ought not to suffer for the neglect of its parent; but he thought the parent should suffer if he could pay, and that the State should be willing to pay in all cases where the parent could not do so. They were told that such a measure would weaken parental authority, responsibility, and control, but he did not fear that, for the reason that there would still be abundant opportunity for exercising those qualities. At the Edinburgh Academy the students could obtain a dinner for a shilling, and practically all the children took that dinner, and they could not get a similar one at home for the sum. At the Merchant Company's school, in a similar way, a sixpenny dinner was provided. He understood that last year the Merchant Company made £100 clear profit out of those meals. He was unable to see how there could be any difference between people whose children had attended that class of school and the poorer parent. Why should the parental responsibility of the poorer parent be undermined any more than that of other parents who paid for their children's meals? There were parents also who sent their children away to schools and did not see them during the whole term, but their parental responsibility was not lessened. Of course if a parent could not pay, the case was different, and it was only then that the State stepped in. It was admitted on all hands that they had many hungry children in Scotland, and they wanted to see that they were fed, and to put it beyond the possibility of doubt that no child should suffer through the misfortune of an indigent father or be forced to learn before it had been fed.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said he fully recognised the difficulties in which they were placed in dealing with this question; but he was one of those who thought that an effort should be made to overcome those difficulties. He could not conceive a more pathetic picture than an attempt by a school teacher to fill the brains of little children whose bodies were inadequately nourished. But in considering legislation of this kind he thought they should not fail to take into account not only all the facts but also all the tendencies which such legislation might have. He did not think sufficient attention had been given to what seemed to him to be a likely and demoralising effect of the Bill. It was true, as the last speaker had said that some of the parents would pay ,and some would not. But what he was afraid would happen, human nature being what it was, was that there would be a tendency on the part of those who paid to say, as time went on, "Why should we pay when 'So and So' does not?" and that gradually the number of payers would decrease. They must therefore be prepared for the result that in the end they would have to pay the whole of the cost of the meals. It was true also that the school board had the power to recover the cost of the meals from the parents of the children, but he ventured to think that if a very large number of parents were attacked it would be found to be quite out of the question to continue to institute proceedings of that kind against the parents of thousands of children, as would be the case in big towns. He believed that in the end all such attempts to recover the money would fail. The case had been quoted of what took place at public schools in England where children were boarded out altogether and lived for months in a house with their teacher. But that case did not apply, because there was a deliberate contract between the parent and the schoolmaster, and there was no question of public money and public service being brought in. Therefore it seemed to him that if they undertook this kind of legislation at all they must boldly face the possibility that the State, having once undertaken it, must do it to the whole extent, and be prepared to accept the whole of the responsibility of finding the money for the purpose. It seemed to him that the result of that undoubtedly would be not only to loosen the feeling of parental responsibility, but certainly to dry up the sources of private charity, and that therefore those sources must no longer be taken into account. If he was right in that contention, it was useless to talk about limiting the Act to a halfpenny rate. If once the State undertook the matter the State must go through with it, because the parents of the children would adopt the idea that it was the duty of the State to feed the children, and would neglect feeding them themselves. Then it was said that the local authority had the right to choose whether or not it would take action under the Bill. But if one local authority in a district took action the inhabitants of another place adjoining would force their authority to take a similar course. The principal object which he had in rising was to point out that the Bill, in regard to its machinery, was illusory, and would therefore be useless. The idea of recovering the money by law from the parents was absolutely illusory; in course of time the proposed limitation of a halfpenny rate would entirely disappear, and in the end, in his judgment, the rate might come to any amount, even to several shillings in the pound.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire) said it was certainly the hope of the promoters of the Bill that the wise exercise of power under the measure would assist in bringing home to the parents a sense of parental responsibility, which they had not at the present time. Perhaps, as the question was discussed last year at some length, and as the debate had gone on for some time, it would be convenient for the House if he stated the position of the Government in regard to it. They had had an interesting debate which had gone beyond the point to which the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill had endeavoured to restrict it, viz., whether that which had been made law for England should be made law for Scotland also. There had been a discussion upon the merits of the Bill, and he did not intend to follow those who had discussed them. He was sure that no one had a right to complain that the mover of the Bill and his supporters had brought the question before the House. At the same time, he thought it would be a sorry day for the House if those who differed from proposals brought before it did not feel that they were at liberty to state their objections. The question was whether the House was to repeat its decision of last year, or had there been any new facts brought forward which should induce them to alter their decision? He was not denying that in many ways, and in many ways for the better, Scotland differed from that part of the Kingdom which was south of the Tweed. They had a different educational system. They had the advantage of the work of the school boards, which were more firmly rooted in public respect and affection than they were, as a rule, south of the Tweed. Nor was he concerned to deny that from the Scottish point of view no sufficient time and attention were given to the Scottish aspect of the question by the Select Committee to which the Bills of last year were referred. He was also ready to admit, as the supporters of the Bill had admitted, that such evidence as was given before that Committee was adverse to the Bill. At the same time he did not think it should be supposed, in regard to a question of this character, that because witnesses gave evidence against the Bill there was no opinion in favour of it. On such a question there was often to be found a vast mass of voiceless opinion which could not be expressed, and they ought to be careful not to omit it from their consideration. Let him remind the House also that the evidence from Scotland was given not so much against the merits of the proposal as against the proposed machinery and methods of the Bill. It could not, as he said last year, be denied that the evil did exist in Scotland; and that statement was quite unshaken by any evidence that had since been adduced. There were unquestionably necessitous children in Scotland who were the victims of neglect, or carelessness, or perhaps of poverty, for which they could not be blamed, and it was a desirable thing, not as a matter of abstract theory, but as a matter of education and educational efficiency, that the school boards should have powers, which they had not at present, of dealing with those cases. As a matter of fact, many school boards in Scotland, co-operating with voluntary assistance, provided a mid-day meal for the children and received payment from the parents; but it was not quite clear that in law they could do this, and it was necessary to set the doubts at rest. He agreed that it was a question whether greater demoralisation would result if the help came from the rates than if it came from private charity. He trusted that the effect of giving these powers to the school boards would afford them access to much fuller information than they were at present able to obtain as to the well-being of the children and the conditions and well-being of the homes in which the children lived. The school boards, indeed, might do a great deal to raise the well-being of the homes, quite apart from the feeding of the children. They might be pretty sure that the school boards in Scotland, if given the full powers they should have, would exercise those powers judiciously, and with due regard to the public welfare. The Government supported the Bill in principle, and assented to its Second Reading. They might have Amendments on details, which they would propose at the proper time for the consideration of those who brought forward the Bill. Perhaps he should say a word about the Government Bill on the same subject. The proposals which the Government would bring forward did not conflict with the proposals of this Bill. They were intended to be supplementary. Regarding the further stages of the Bill, he assumed that, following on the Second Reading, it might be the purpose of the Member in charge of the Bill to propose its reference to a Grand Committee. The Government would have no objection to that course. He was sorry that the accident of the ballot did not bring the Bill on at a later stage, because if ever there was a Bill pre-eminently fitted for consideration by a Scottish Committee it was this one. Though the Government had announced their intention of proposing a Scottish Grand Committee, it was not possible for them to delay proceedings on the present Bill.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said the Bill before the House had been most eloquently debated. A good deal had been said in its favour and no doubt a good deal could be said against it. He rose, not with any intention of delaying the House in coming to a decision, but with the object of asking the Government a single question. The Government had accepted the principle of the Bill so far as Scotland was concerned, and before the House came to a decision he wished to put a question which would largely affect the Irish Members. He wished to know whether the Government would give a definite pledge to introduce legislation during the present session to confer the same boon on Irish children who were just as hungry as the children of Scotland and England, if not more so.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but MR. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said it was not his intention to delay the House more than a few minutes, but as one who had always been associated with the feeding of school children he claimed a right to say a few words. Many Members of the House held opinions substantially different from his own views. They were afraid that parental responsibility would be entirely overlooked and encroached upon by the Bill, and that their fears had some foundation might be found in the fact that the second order on the Paper to-day was one to provide, at the expense of the State, not only food for children but also for medical attendance.

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire) said that that Bill provided for medical inspection, not medical attendance, which was a totally different thing.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD admitted that medical inspection was a different thing, but nobody would deny that it was conferring a further benefit on the children. He did not propose to argue whether it was right or wrong for the State to assume that responsibility, but only to say that for his own part he believed it was the natural sequence of free education. In the past they had said that the State must educate the children free. That being conceded, it was an easy step to say that a child should not be hungry when he went to school, that he should be properly clothed, have his teeth put right, and be medically inspected and provided with proper recreation. He was one of those who voted in favour of the Bill last year for England, but he had not yet made up his mind as to the way he should vote on the present occassion. He had, however, been much influenced by the circular which he believed everyone in the House had received from Glasgow, and when he saw that the School Board for Glasgow might be called upon to supply free meals for 60,000 children, and, assuming that the school session was forty weeks, the cost of two meals at 1½d. each or 1s. 3d. per head per week, would mean an annual expenditure of at least £150,000, apart from the interest on the enormous capital expenditure on buildings and equipment, he honestly confessed it had considerable weight with him, especially when he found that Scottish Members were not agreed upon the question. Another point that would weigh with him was the attitude of the Government upon the Bill. He would like to know, were the Government going to give facilities for the Bill or were they going to bring in a Bill of their own containing more drastic provisions. Were they going to drop their Bill and adopt this private Member's Bill, because if they were going to adopt the course taken last session he could only say he should vote against the Bill. He strongly objected to the principle of the Government's adopting private Member's Bills. He saw in the Bill a considerable means, from the Government point of view, of avoiding trouble. He believed that many thought that if they assisted the Bill to pass it would avoid giving trouble in their constituencies, and for that reason they welcomed it, but he would have liked to have heard from the Secretary for Scotland the line that the Government proposed to adopt with regard to it. Until he heard what their intention was he would not be able to vote for the Bill upon its merits, as he would like to do.

*Captain CRAIG (Down, E.) said that, as one of the members of the Committee engaged upon the Bill of last year, he would like to refer to the conclusion arrived at by the Committee which made that Bill inapplicable to Scotland. He would vote against the Bill for the following reasons. If the Bill last session had passed into law in the condition in which it came down from the Committee it would have been much less objectionable to him than the form in which it passed into law. If its application to Scotland was necessary upon those lines, every trial should have been given to the Bill passed last session. There were a great number of opinions on that Bill, in the country and in the House, and having consulted with many of them, and knowing what passed in the Committee upstairs last year, he would have thought the promoters of this Bill would have shown better discretion if they had allowed a certain time to elapse, so that they might have seen whether the fears that many entertained with regard to the Act of last session had any foundation in fact. He believed that the reason for the Bills being pressed so early in the session was in order to escape criticism upon the measure which was already law for England and Wales, and he really thought the risks in a measure of such gigantic importance, which placed more burdens on the rates and ran the grave risk of sacrificing large contributions voluntarily given, were so great that he was prepared to vote against the Bill. He would like to have strong evidence coming from the great cities of Scotland in favour of the measure before he could vote for it. The Bill went much farther than its promoters had any idea of. Those who took a conscientious interest in the Bill last year were under the impression that it was to deal with necessitous children, and so it was up to the last moment, when it was altered in such a manner as to put an obligation on all schools to provide meals for all children. That was the reason why it met with such opposition from the Opposition. Had it been promoted from the point of view of relieving those who from stress of circumstances were unable to feed their children, there would not have been the slightest objection to it from that side of the House. But they were now face to face with a great scheme which placed the local authorities all over Scotland in the position that, if a few faddists desired to start a large canteen, the local rates were to be charged, even if the feeling among the large section of the people was that it would do harm in that particular part of the country. During the recess he had taken the opportunity to make the most careful inquiries in Scotland of those interested in the matter, and he was assured, in the interests of the children themselves, that there was no neccessity for such a measure. In the large country districts the inhabitants seemed to resent the idea that temptation should be placed in the way of their children by charity such as this measure might lead to in time. It was because he felt that all the evidence put before the Committee pointed to the fact that the children coming hungry to the schools was due more to wrong treatment at home, to the want of knowledge on the part of parents of how to feed young children and bring them up properly than to inability to supply them with a breakfast in the morning or a dinner in the middle of the day that he opposed the Bill. He was now only dealing with the principles of the Bill, but when it came to the Committee Stage he would do his utmost to rectify some of the most grievous mistakes made in the measure of last year. The actual amount of money necessary to accomplish the ends in view was out of all proportion to the good to be done. The Bill would be exceedingly costly to carry out, and in the end would only accomplish that which local charity was doing at the present time. Had those in charge of the Bill been really sincere in their endeavours to alleviate the distress in Scottish school districts it would have been far better for them to have come to the House later in the session or better still to have permitted another year to pass to allow a fair trial of the Act which was passed last year for England and Wales.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD asked if the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland would answer his question as to whether the Government intended to give facilities to the Bill.

MR. SINCLAIR said that the question of the Government's granting facilities to the Bill did not yet arise. The Bill was in a very favourable place, and it might not require facilities. As there was no rate-aid given to schools in Ireland, the provisions of such a Bill could not be applied to Ireland.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton) rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

*MR. CARLILE (Hertforshire, St. Albans) regretted the unsympathetic answer which the House had received from the right hon. Gentleman. The House had a right to know whether the Government proposed to deal with the Bill on the lines followed by them in regard to a similar Bill last session. Many Members of the House were then precluded from discussing different questions on the tacit understanding that it was a private Member's measure and that no facilities would be given to it. He was sure hon. Members below the gangway would have seen from the whole tone of the debate that so far as hon. Members on the Opposition Benches were concerned their attitude had been distinctly sympathetic. Though they might have been antagonistic to certain principles which underlay the measure, so far as the condition of the children was concerned their attitude had been one of anxiety and well maintained and consistent sympathy. [Laughter.] Hon. Members below the gangway greeted that statement with derision, but the opposition was due to the action of hon. Members themselves. It was because they realised that it was one of the early steps towards that policy of Socialism which hon. Members believed in and were trying to bring about that they looked upon the Bill with so much distrust. But so far as any want of sympathy with the children going to school suffering from hunger was concerned there was no lack in that regard. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs was the most destructive supporter of the Bill. The hon. Member had told the House that he had under his own eye in five or more parishes of Scotland a voluntary system at work which was doing all that was necessary. So far as he (Mr. Carlile) was concerned he objected to the importation of the word "charity" in this debate. He did not see why voluntary support should be characterised as charity. Everybody objected to receive charity but no one objected to receive voluntary support. [Laughter.] Hon. Members received these remarks with derision, but he might point out that many of them might not have succeeded in securing election to Parliament but for the voluntary support which they received. But they would strongly object to be told that that voluntary support was charity. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs had told the House that those voluntary efforts had been entirely crowned with success, and that in not a few cases they were self-supporting. If that was so and if, as the hon. Member said, in country districts voluntary effort could be made equally self-supporting under the present system, why was it necessary to introduce a measure such as that under discussion which was extremely objectionable to a large number of the community and against which they had been appealed to, by circular by those who were chiefly concerned, to vote. The memorial which had been placed in the hands of every hon. Member, than which no more convincing document had been made available to the House on the subject, showed that the school boards for Scotland, taken as a whole, were strongly opposed to the principle of the Bill. They recognised, what apparently the Government did not, that the principle under lying it would be injurious to Scotland. He did not wish to labour the question of undermining parental responsibility, but there could be no doubt that one of the principles which underlay the Bill was a desire to relieve the parents of the responsibility of feeding their children. Why on earth should parents who received from any kind of poor rates food for their children not be penalised as those who received Poor Law relief? Since it was usual for those who received parish or other poor relief to suffer disfranchisement, why should not that principle apply in these cases? If those who were qualified and able to support their children were unwilling to do so, or lazy and indifferent as to their condition, and rather than bother about them let their children receive meals at the cost of the rates, they were the very persons who ought to be disfranchised. He did not wish to delay the House in coming to a decision, but he pointed out that notwithstanding the fact that the Opposition was only a small minority in the House they represented in all probability the great majority of the United Kingdom in this matter, and they would take this and every other opportunity to express their disapproval of Socialistic legislation.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) said that, as a Member of the Royal Commission on Physical Training, which first drew attention to this question, he thought he might say that the feeling in Scotland was that, though there was a large amount of under-feeding, there was no general tendency amongst the people of Scotland to neglect the feeding of their children; but, on the contrary, that the people of Scotland attended almost invariably to the care and feeding of their children, and that this was a burden they would be unwilling to throw upon the rates. The recommendations of the Commissioners, therefore, were very modest in their character, and were mainly that the public might well provide the machinery and facilities for meals, and leave to voluntary agencies the provision of the food. So far as he had been able to understand it there was no desire in the Bill to discourage voluntary effort. School boards if they thought necessary might associate themselves with any committee upon which that board was represented, but they were not compelled to associate themselves. The Bill, being entirely permissive, removed a great deal of his objection to it. He would strongly resist any interference with parental responsibility, as he honestly believed that any such interference would be the commencement of the downfall of the country. What had made Scotland was not exactly its natural wealth, its agricultural possibilities, or its climate, but the independence of the character of the people. If they were to whittle that away and to tell a man that having brought children into the world he need do nothing else but lend them to be fed, clothed, and taught by the State, it certainly would weaken parental responsibility. If he thought the Bill would in any degree weaken parental responsibility he would not hesitate to vote against it; but so long as it was made optional in Scotland he was sure that the common sense which dominated the school boards would teach them to use the powers conferred upon them with moderation. But it was not feeding alone that they had to look after, for attention must be given to the clothing, cleanliness, and general welfare of the children; and it was in these matters that he thought voluntary effort would be most valuable. One point that was not touched in the Bill was medical inspection. He recognised the enormous importance of it, and he hoped a subsequent Bill would deal with the subject. Although there might be much to cause alarm in the Bill, it was at any rate optional, and would be left to the good sense of the school boards in Scotland He, therefore, felt obliged to vote for the Second Reading.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 227; Noes, 52. (Division List No. 32.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Aeland (Christchurch)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Astbury, John Meir
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, E. (Cork. S.)
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Malaon)
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F.L.(Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, RtHnSirJ.T.(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt.HnRichardKnight
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R.R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Clough, William
Coats, Sir T. Glen(Renfrew, W.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H.A.E.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, SirWm.J. (S.PancrasW.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C.H(Sussex, EGrinst'd)
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W.H.(St.Pancras, N
Dillon, John
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, MajorE Martin(Walsall)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.Herbt. John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J. Keir (MerthyrTydvil
Harvey, W. E (Derbyshire, NE
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hayden, John Patrick
Hedges, A. Paget
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hunt ,Rowland
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John(Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, E. H. (Rochester)
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, JM(FalkirkB'ghs)
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah(Down, S
MacVeigh, Chas. (Donegal, E.)
M'Killop, W.
Mar ham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Me gher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Captain Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, Ropert John (Norfolk, E.
Priestley, WEB(Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Rusell (Scarboro)
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'm't'n
Roberts, Chas. H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Robertson, RtHn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, Sir G.Scott(Bradfrd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V.H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbt. L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph(Chesh)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)

Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney
Waterlow, D. S.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, L. (Carmarthen)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hn. C.H.W. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. George Roberts.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, RtHn SirAlex.F.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hon. SirH
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Harvey
Duncan, Robert(Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Henderson, JM(Aberdeen, W.)
Hervey, F. W. F.(BurySEdm'ds)
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hon. ColW
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Liddell, Henry
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. AR
Long, Rt. Hn Walter (Dublin, S
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Mallet, Charles E.
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Moore, William
Napier, T. B.
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darling
Rees, J. D.
Renton, Major Leslie
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, Sir Edw'rd (Salisbury
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Henry Craik and Mr. Harold Cox.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc."—(*Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) said that before the Question was put he would like to ask the Government what course they proposed to follow, not merely as to sending the Bill upstairs, but as to making it a Government measure. He thought they ought to have some clear statement as to that. He was not going to discuss the question of turning private measures into public Bills. Though it might be revelant he did not mean to raise it now. If it was intended to make this measure a public Bill he hoped the Government would take care that on the Standing Committee they were strongly represented.

MR. SINCLAIR submitted that the question did not arise at the present stage. The Government could not say what considerations might arise at a later period of the session, and they were not able, therefore, to say what the attitude of the Government would be towards the Bill. Their present attitude had been quite clearly stated that afternoon. The present feeling of the Government towards the measure was friendly, and they had given it their support, and had gone into the Lobby in favour of the Second Reading. They were favourable to the Motion that it should go upstairs to Grand Committee. The right hon. Gentleman asked whether the Government would adopt the Bill or give it facilities. As he had already said, at this stage the question did not arise. The Bill occupied a peculiarly favourable position, and it was quite possible that without assistance of any kind, or the granting of facilities, it might become law. Therefore, he was not able to answer the question more definitely than that the attitude of the Government was shown by their action on that occasion.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) said the answer of the Secretary for Scotland was by no means satisfactory. He thought he must have forgotten the action of the Government last session in regard to the Land Tenure Bill, which occupied exactly the same position last session as the present Bill did this session. The Land Tenure Bill was moved by a private Member, and it was sent to the Grand Committee upstairs, where the Government were conspicuous by their absence. They took little or no part in the conduct of the Bill in Committee; and when questions were asked in the House, and the Government were appealed to give them their support upstairs, they said that it was a private Bill upon which they had expressed their views, and that they had only a remote connection with its passage upstairs. Then the Bill underwent considerable changes in Committee, and they were in great difficulty, having no legal representative of the Government except a Scottish law officer to whom to appeal. So, considerably changed, the Bill came back to the House, and at a moment's notice it was adopted by the Government. The Bill under discussion occupied no more favourable position than did the Land Tenure Bill last year. If the Government took little part in the conduct of the Bill upstairs, and the measure underwent considerable changes which made it altogether objectionable to those on that side of the House who had voted for it, and still more objectionable to those who opposed and if the Government then adopted it, was it not quite obvious that the whole position of the Bill would be altered? Having regard to this modern practice, adopted for the first time by the present Government, of allowing Bills to go upstairs, without any suggestion as to what course they meant to adopt, and, then, when they came back from Committee, taking them up as Government measures, he thought his right hon. friend had asked what was reasonable and fair, namely, that they should now be told whether this Bill was so important that the Government were likely to adopt it. The principle of the Bill was clear, however it might be changed, and surely the Government knew now whether they attached so much importance to that principle as to make it necessary to hasten the progress of the Bill.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD said that the Secretary for Scotland in his speech had stated that the Government had a Bill in which they were dealing with the same subject.

MR. SINCLAIR said the Government Bill did not deal with the same subject, but with medical inspection in schools.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD said that no doubt the Government had anticipation of a Bill dealing with the same subject as the Bill under discussion. What he wanted to know was whether the Government were going to lie in wait with their Bill, and, should there not be a chance of bringing it forward, adopt this Bill of a private Member? Or if they had a chance of getting their own Bill through, would they then drop the private Member's Bill? They had their own Bill and a private Member's Bill, which they were ready to adopt if they saw no chance of getting their own through. He maintained that it was a novel proceeding on the part of the Government to adopt a private Member's Bill, and, after it had been discussed only until four o'clock, send it upstairs, thereby giving it a priority which the Government Bill, if brought forward, would not have had.

SIR HENRY CRAIK said the Secretary for Scotland, in answer to a Question, had declared that he intended to bring forward a Bill dealing with the question of Scottish education. He was not referring to his remarks made that day—remarks which were none of the clearest he could assure him. He was referring to a distinct answer which he had given to a Question. The answer was in effect that certain provisions would be introduced into a Scottish Bill dealing with medical inspection and with the feeding of children. From the language used elsewhere, he thought they were entitled to ask the Government on which horse they would try to win, because they were not going to have them running two horses. Were they going to await the chance of their own Bill, and, if it failed, to take up the Bill proposed by their masters on the Labour Benches?

MR. SINCLAIR said he would endeavour to reply to the questions which had been put. Might he remind the House that the next Bill on the Paper dealt with medical inspection in schools in England. Precisely as that Bill stood separate from the Bill of last session for feeding children, so the Bill now before the House was separate from any proposal which might be contained in the Bill of the Government dealing with Scottish education. There was no necessary connection between the two Bills; either could stand and be considered separately. With reference to the question as to facilities, he would answer that question when the time came. There was a wide difference between this Bill and the Land Tenure Bill. In the first place this was a purely Scottish Bill of much more limited scope than the Land Tenure Bill. In the Lords its application to Scotland was deleted. He could assure the House that they would take every step to ensure that the Government was properly represented on the Committee and that the Committee was properly manned.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said the Government had been fortunate enough to get not only the first order but the second. They would have not only two, but three horses. Both those Bills practically represented the view of the Government measure, which would be produced shortly. The Government not only introduced Bills in a legitimate way in the gracious Speech from the Throne, but they used the ballot to adopt any number of illegitimate children.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 231; Noes, 52. (Division List No. 33.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Clarke, C. Goddard
Clough, William
Coats, Sir T. Glen (Renfrew, W.)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley

Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S Pancras, W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dillon, John
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis

Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hedges, A. Paget
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Kean, John

M'Killop, W.
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd(Carmarthen)
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price,Robert John(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Robertson,Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Major J. B.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley,Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas,David Alfred(Merthyr
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. C. H.W.(Hull, W.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. George Roberts.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F.
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hon. SirH.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cavendish, Rt.Hon.VictorC.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos.H.A.E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Harvey
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence(Kent,Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Hervey,F.W.F.(Bury S.Edm'ds
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Kenyon-Slaney,Rt.Hon.Col.W
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Liddell, Henry
Long,Rt.Hn Walter(Dublin,S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Moore, William
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Roberts,S.(Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Smith, Abel H.(Hertford,East)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,Rt.Hn. J G(Oxf'dUniv.
Thomson,W Mitchell-(Lanark)
Wilson,A Stanley(York,E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon.C.B. Stuart-

Tellers for the Noes—Col. Lockwood and Sir Henry Craik.

EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. W. R. REA (Scarborough) moved the Second Reading of the Education Acts Amendment Bill. He said that considering the short time available for the consideration of the measure he would not detain the House more than a few minutes. The Bill he asked the House to give a Second Reading was an absolutely non-contentious measure. Its two operative clauses were taken verbatim from last year's Education Bill in the form in which it left this House and had the approval of every section of the House. Not only was the Bill supported by those whose names appeared on the back of it, but the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member for North Camberwell, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University united with them in declaring that these two clauses were worth the whole of last year's Bill put together. One of the clauses permitted school authorities to provide play centres or other means of recreation; and the second, which was the more important of the two, enabled the central education authority to compel local education authorities to provide for the medical inspection of children attending elementary schools. He did not think he needed to labour the point any further. It had been made clear to the House how necessary some provision of the kind contained in these two clauses was in the interests of the children. He might point out that the Bill as at present drafted did not apply to Scotland. The reason for that was that he had slavishly followed the Bill of last year, but if it was deemed advisable later on to extend it to Scotland nobody would be more pleased than himself. As hon. Members were aware, there was a process known to the House as "the massacre of the innocents," and although he was aware that the Government had promised a Bill dealing with the subject, he had introduced this measure lest, at a later stage of the session, pressure of other business compelled the Government to throw over their own Bill. He hoped the House would make sure that these two provisions were passed into law this session.

Mr. PARKER (Halifax) seconded, and said that he hoped hon. Members on the Opposition side would not now go back upon their word by opposing this measure. He appealed to the House to allow it to pass the Second Reading.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Has the Government nothing to say upon this measure?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. Lough, Islington, W.) said there were very excellent reasons why the Bill should receive the benevolent support of the Government. The clauses it contained had been taken from the Government measure of last session without alteration, and were then regarded as non-contentious not only by the Members of this House but also in another place. The proposals had received the most careful consideration. The first clause had been amended in such a way as to meet every suggestion that was made by the Opposition, and the second clause was warmly supported by the Leader of the Opposition. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be ready to extend his support to it upon the present occasion. The right hon. Member for South Dublin had argued that because the Government were introducing a Bill dealing with the subject they ought not to support a private Member's measure.

Mr. WALTER LONG: That was not my argument, and I did not suggest anything of the kind.

Mr. LOUGH said that some other hon. Member had used that argument. He did not consider the fact that the Government were going to introduce an Education Bill to be any reason for rejecting this measure. The Government saw no reason why the Second Reading should not be taken practically without discussion.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he did not mean to resist the Second Reading. He supported the provisions of the Bill last year, and would do so again. He ought, however, to throw out the warning that under the Bill a burden would be thrown on the rates, and the suggestion that the Government should provide for that in their own measure. He hoped the Government Bill would show that the enormous burden already thrown by primary education upon the ratepayers of the country would not be augmented by a measure whose general provisions they all desired to see carried.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) hoped the Government, when they brought in their measure, would meet the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition and so take away any excuse for delaying the progress of clauses so generally desired by the

House. In the last Parliament when they were discussing the physical deterioration of the race the desire was expressed on all sides that something of the kind now proposed should be done. He hoped, therefore, that the House would agree to the Second Reading.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. Member for West Islington who had spoken on behalf of the Government had informed the House that as his hon. friend had secured an excellent place in the ballot, the Government were bound to support him.

MR. LOUGH: No, no.

DR. MACNAMARA: We are supporting him.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the hon. Member for West Islington had stated the Government were going to introduce a Bill of a similar character. That was exactly why he objected to their supporting a private Member's Bill.

DR. MACNAMARA: Why?

SIR F. BANBURY: Because if the Government had a measure to deal with the subject they ought to bring it in themselves. The Government had no right to avail themselves of the fortunes of the ballot, and thus have two horses. ["Why?"] It was impossible to consider a private Bill fully, because the Closure was allowed after a very short discussion. The Government by adopting private Members' Bills avoided going through all the details as they would have to do in connection with a Government Bill, and used that advantage to pass a measure into law without its having been properly discussed. Private Bills were now discussed on Fridays, and many hon. Members took advantage of that fact and stayed away. ["No."] The consequence was that many hon. Members knew nothing about the Second Reading discussions on those Bills. The hon. Member who introduced this Bill said the two clauses contained in it were the best clauses contained in the Education Bill of last year. He quite agreed with that argument, but he could not admit that that was any good reason for passing the Bill. The Education Bill of last year was so bad that to pass two clauses because they were the best it contained was not a good argument at all. Everybody agreed that it was advisable to have medical inspection of the children in the schools. There was no doubt that infection was spread because the children were not medically examined, and with that part of the Bill he entirely agreed. In the previous debate it was said that the Bill would provide medical inspection before food was given, but he did not see anything in the Bill to provide for that. The clauses were so badly drafted that it was difficult to see what they did mean. [Cries of "Divide, divide."] He was surprised at the impatience of hon. Members who, after a twenty minutes discussion, were crying "Divide, divide." Things were coming to a pretty pass when they expected to pass Bills of this kind practically undiscussed, because they happened to be approved of by a section of the House sitting below the gangway. ["It is approved by the whole House."] The Members of the Labour Party were not authorised to speak for the whole House, and they would learn better manners when they had been in Parliament a little longer. Perhaps they would not be there as long as they thought they would. [A LABOUR MEMBER: We shall be here as long as you.] He objected to the Government's availing themselves of private Member's Bills improperly discussed, and reserved to himself the right, at a later stage, to move the rejection of one of the clauses in the Bill to which he took exception.

MR. BUTCHER (Cambridge University) urged the importance of making progress with a complete measure, and of dealing with the subject of teachers' registration. It would be a great pity if, after the amount of time spent last session in bringing about an understanding as to the teachers' register, it should fall through. He hoped the Government would see that such a provision went through in its complete form.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said that, in answer to a question, the Prime Minister had stated that the Government had their hands so full that they could not accept the care of any more private Members' Bills. But in spite of this declaration the Government had taken the very first opportunity of embracing one more. The practice on the part of the Government of picking the brains of private Members was rapidly becoming a scandal. So far as this particular Bill was concerned it might have elements of good in it, but it ought at any rate to be explained to the House. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill had treated the House with absolute contempt, for he did not attempt in the briefest possible way to explain its provisions. Instead of doing that he relied on the big battalions behind him and the Government Whips. It was absurd to charge them with obstructing useful legislation when they were only demanding a clear exposition of the main principles of the Bill. They had so many private Member's Bills before them that it was impossible for any private Member to grasp their principles without some explanation. He was not going to enter upon a detailed criticism of the Bill, but he hoped that in future any hon. Member taking upon himself the responsibility of introducing such a measure would treat the House fairly, and explain its provisions. [An HON. MEMBER: That was done last year.] Surely the hon. Member did not consider that that was any excuse for no explanation being offered this year. If the Bill had been introduced under the ten minutes rule the hon. Member would have had an opportunity of explaining its provisions to the House.

MR. W. R. REA rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc."—(*Mr. Walter Rea.*)

Debate arising.

And, it being after Five of the clock, and objection being taken to further proceeding, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

NEW BILLS.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Bill to amend the Law relating to the qualification and tenure of office of Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors; and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster, Sir Francis S. Powell, Sir John Tuke, and Mr. Rainy.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the qualification and tenure of office of Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors; and for other purposes," presented, and read a first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 85.]

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACTS AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and otherwise to facilitate the building of houses for the working classes in rural districts, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster, Sir Francis Channing, Mr. Soames, Mr. Eve, Mr. Hart-Davies, and Mr. Nicholls.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and otherwise to facilitate the building of houses for the working classes in rural districts," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 86.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law: Sir Lewis M'Iver; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. MacIver.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at three minutes after
Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 4th March, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read: Counsel called in: Witnesses examined. Moved, That the Bill be now read 2a. The same was agreed to. Bill read 2a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

Fitzgerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read: Counsel called in: Witnesses examined. Moved, That the Bill be now read 2a. The same was agreed to. Bill read 2a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House; That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: Buckhaven Dock; Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways.

Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with: Simon-Carves Bye-Product Coke Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited (Petition for Bill).

And also the Certificates that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: South Lincolnshire Water [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Presented, and read 1a.

MEDWAY LOWER NAVIGATION BILL [H.L.]

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The orders made on Wednesday and Thursday last discharged and Bill committed.

MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL (BRIDGEWATER CANAL) BILL [H.L.]

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The orders made on Wednesday and Thursday last discharged, and Bill committed.

ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY BILL [H.L.]

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The order made on Wednesday last discharged, and Bill committed.

Colne Valley Water Bill [H.L.]; Portishead District Water Bill [H.L.].—Read 2a, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Great Yarmouth Waterworks and Lowestoft Water and Gas Bill [H.L.].—Read 2a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty Bill [H.L.].—Read 2a, and committed.

YORK AND DISTRICT TRAMWAYS BILL [H.L.]

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The order of Thursday last, discharged. Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers Bill [H.L.]; Devonport Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]; Middlesbrough Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Oxford and District Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection; That the Lord Leith of Fyvie be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Hylton, and that the Lord Leith of Fyvie be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Return showing the expenditure from the grant for public education in Scotland in the year 1906, with Statistics.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

COLONIES, ANNUAL.

No. 518. Leeward Islands (Report for 1905–1906).

COMMERCIAL, No. 2. (1907).

Correspondence relating to Suez Canal Dues.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.

Fifty-ninth Report from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England, with an Appendix.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Report and tables for the year 1906.

TUBERCULOSIS (HUMAN AND BOVINE) ROYAL COMMISSION.

Second Interim Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the relations of human and animal tuberculosis. Part II., Appendix, Vol. IV., Histological and Bacteriological Investigations by Arthur Eastwood, M.D.

MINES AND QUARRIES (WINGATE GRANGE COLLIERY EXPLOSION).

Reports to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by A. H. Ruegg, K.C., and R. D. Bain and J. B. Atkinson, M.Sc., two of His Majesty's Inspectors of Mines, on the circumstances attending an explosion which occurred at Wingate Grange Colliery, on the 14th October 1906.

QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY.

Annual report and accounts of the Governors for the year ended 31st December 1906.

POST OFFICE (POSTAL AGREEMENTS).

Surinam.—Agreement between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Dutch Colony of Surinam, dated 29th April 1906, to 7th November 1906.

Honduras.—Agreement between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Republic of Honduras, dated 12th October 1906 to 10th December, 1906.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ARMY.

Draft Order in Council declaring what is requisite to entitle a volunteer of Volunteer Engineer Corps, Volunteer Divisions of Submarine Miners and Volunteer Electrical Engineers to be deemed an efficient volunteer.

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES) (VISITING COMMITTEES).

Draft of rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Prison Acts, 1877 and 1898, with respect to the constitution of the Visiting Committee of Bristol Prison.

INDIA OFFICE ESTABLISHMENT.

Order in Council, dated 21st December, 1906, approving new and revised appointments and alterations of salaries, etc., in the establishment of the Secretary of State for India in Council.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM.

Statement of the funds of Sir John Soane's Museum, 5th January 1907. Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

JUDICATURE BILL [H.L.]

[SECOND READING].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, this is a small Bill in point of compass, but not unimportant as regards its value. The effect of it is to authorise the Court of Appeal in England to sit in divisions consisting of two Judges, with the consent of the Lord Chancellor. The circumstances out of which the necessity for this Bill arises are as follows. The Court of Appeal consists normally of six Judges—the Masters of the Rolls, and five Lords Justices of Appeal. At present, for all work that is not interlocutory work, the Court of Appeal must sit not less than three strong in each Court, unless they can obtain the consent of the litigants to have their case tried before two Judges; and as one of the parties is nearly always anxious to postpone the decision, such consent is not very probable. The result is that whenever one of the six Judges becomes ill the Court is brought to a deadlock, unless they can secure the assistance of one of the three or four assistant Judges of the Court of Appeal—the Lord Chancellor, any one who has been Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of England, or the President of the Probate and Divorce Division. These are very busy men, and it is really a very inconvenient thing, when some temporary ailment prevents one of the ordinary Judges of the Court of Appeal from sitting, to be obliged to take away from their regular work one of these very important Officers of State. It is quite impossible on short notice to procure the necessary third Judge to make the Court. I myself sat for a month in the Court of Appeal last year, though I am afraid I could not undertake to do it again, with a view to getting rid of the arrears of business. The arrears were very serious last year; they are more serious now than they were this time last year; and I believe that the existence of these arrears, which have been accumulating gradually in the last four or five years, have an oppressive effect upon the Court, retarding the business, and making it difficult for this extremely hardworked Court to get through its work. The remedy proposed is that, with the consent of the Lord Chancellor, the Court of Appeal may sit at any time in divisions consisting of two Judges instead of three. I ought to state that the old Court of Appeal, before the Judicature Acts, consisted of two Lords Justices, and was for a considerable number of years one of the very ablest Courts that ever sat in England. For my part I believe that two Judges sitting together are really as effective as three; at the same time it is not desirable that the Court should regularly consist of two Judges only. The only alternative to the proposal in this Bill is to appoint three new Judges of the Court of Appeal, and if the rule of sitting in three is to be followed it will be necessary to appoint three new Lords Justices. But there is no occasion for three new Lords Justices. In the ordinary course of events they would be superfluous and would not be wanted. It is not merely a question of expense. I would not grudge an expenditure of £15,000 a year if it were necessary for so great a purpose, but I do deprecate the multiplication of Judges of very high rank. I think it most desirable that the immense reputation which is enjoyed—deservedly enjoyed—by the Court of Appeal and by the High Court of Justice should not be impaired by the addition of more Judges, the effect of which must be to diminish to a certain extent the prestige, influence, and reputation of the Court. I am not aware of any alternative except those two—either to increase the number of Judges or to amend the law in the manner prescribed in this Bill. I believe the necessities of the case will be adequately met by the short and simple machinery of this Bill, by which, in time of emergency, the Court will be enabled to sit as it used to do in old days with complete satisfaction to everybody, in divisions consisting of two Lords Justices. I beg to move.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I do not rise for the purpose of saying a word as to the merits of the Bill which the noble and learned Lord has just submitted to the House. I should be quite incompetent to discuss its merits; but I do venture to raise my voice in protest as to the hurry with which we have been asked to take the Second Reading. The Bill was only ordered to be printed on February 25, and in the Order for to-day which was originally circulated to your Lordships no mention was made of the fact that the Bill was to come on this evening. Subsequently a revised Order was circulated. I saw this revised Order just before I came to the House, and that was the first intimation that I received that this important subject was to come up for discussion. Looking round the House I do not see upon these Benches that we are fortunate enough to have the presence of any Peers who can speak with authority upon high legal matters, and we therefore approach the question at a very great disadvantage. I venture to put it to the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, either that he might allow the debate to be adjourned, or, if he attaches importance to getting the Bill a Second

Reading this evening, that ample time should be given to your Lordships to consider the measure before another stage is taken; and I hope that when it comes up for discussion again we may be fortified by the presence on both sides of the House of noble Lords who are competent to discuss its provisions.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: With the indulgence of your Lordships I should like to express my regret, and to state that I was not aware that adequate notice had not been given. Of course, I have no desire unduly to hurry the Bill through, and accordingly, if the noble Marquess desires it, I will willingly acquiesce in his suggestion that the debate should be adjourned. I may say, however, that there is urgency for the Bill, because the arrears are going on, and it is desirable, if the Houses of Parliament should think fit to accede to this proposal, that it should come into effect at as early a date as possible. But that, of course, does not in the least interfere with the necessity for full notice to be given. I do not know whether the noble Marquess will think next Thursday adequate notice; if so, I would move the adjournment of the debate till that day.

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE indicated assent.

Further debate adjourned to Thursday next.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 4th March, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz.: Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (Additional Capital) Bill; Barry Railway Bill; South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill; Great Central Railway Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the following Bill, introduced pursuant to the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with, viz.:—Buckhaven Dock [Lords].

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—Simon Carves' Bye-Product Coke-Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited, Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

North-East London Railway Bill; North Staffordshire Railway Bill; Worthing Gas Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING ACTS.

Petition from South West Northumberland, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Paper [presented 1st March] to be printed. [No. 63.]

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 518 (Leeward Islands, Report for 1905–6) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AUSTRALIA.

Copy presented, of Correspondence with the Governor-General of Australia on the subject of Suez Canal Transit Dues [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of Draft Order in Council declaring what is requisite to entitle a Volunteer or Volunteer Engineer Corps, Volunteer Divisions of Submarine Miners, and Volunteer Electrical Engineers to be deemed an efficient Volunteer [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUEZ CANAL (COMMERCIAL, No. 2, 1907).

Copy presented, of Correspondence relating to Suez Canal Duties [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY.

Copy presented, of Annual Report and Accounts of the Governors for the year 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (TRIAL OF ELECTION PETITIONS, 1906–7).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 26th February; *Mr. Morton*]; to lie upon the Table.

INDIA OFFICE.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated December 21st, 1906, approving new and revised Appointments and alterations of Salaries, etc., in the Establishment of the Secretary of State for India in Council [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Return showing the Expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in Scotland in the year 1906, with Statistics [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.

SOANE'S MUSEUM.

Copy of Statement of the Funds of the Museum of the late Sir John Soane, on 5th January, 1907 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Petition of York Telegraphists.

MR. H. GREENWOOD (York): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that in July, 1906, the telegraphists at York forwarded a petition to him complaining of the duties enforced at that office; and if he can now give an answer to that petition.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The petition was duly received, and steps were taken to inquire into the complaint made. It was necessary, however, before the question of the duties could be satisfactorily dealt with, to await the result of the Autumn Return of Telegraph working; and of this fact the memorialists were informed. I regret the delay, but I hope shortly to be in a position to give them a definite reply.

Delay in Filling Vacancies in Belfast Post Office.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the cause of delay in filling up three male sorting clerks' and telegraphists' vacancies at Belfast; and whether, in view of the congestion among the male learners' staff, he will cause them to be filled forthwith.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) It has been already decided to fill these vacancies, which had been held over in consequence of some doubt as to the numbers of the staff required by the work at Belfast, and appointments will shortly be made.

Christmas Day Postal Deliveries at Douglas, Isle of Man.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that at Douglas, Isle of Man, there was an evening delivery on Christmas Day, in addition to the ordinary single delivery; whether he is aware that this was not demanded by the public, and entailed continuous work on the part of many postmen for periods of twelve to sixteen hours; and whether he will revert to the usual practice of one delivery next Christmas.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Most of the Christmas correspondence for delivery in the Isle of Man was due to reach Douglas by the regular mail steamer on the afternoon of Christmas Day, and there would have been serious complaint if this had been held over until the following day. The arrangements for the delivery of letters on Christmas Day in the Isle of Man depends upon the running of the steamers and the particular day on which Christmas Day falls; but whenever possible I will see that there is only one delivery in future.

Superannuation of Municipal Officials.

MR. RADFORD (Islington, E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will consider the advisability of introducing a Bill in this present session of Parliament to provide for granting pensions and superannuation allowances to the officers, servants, and workmen employed by the councils of metropolitan boroughs (except Bethnal Green, Kensington, and Stepney), in view of the fact that the officers and servants of boards of guardians of the poor of London parishes, the London County Council, the visiting committees of the London Pauper Lunatic Asylums, the managers of the Metropolitan Asylums District, the managers of Sick Asylums Districts, and the Metropolitan Police already have provision made for them out of funds secured on the general and county rates levied throughout the metropolitan area.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I could not give any promise to introduce a Bill on this subject. I may remind my hon. friend that Metropolitan borough councils are empowered to grant superannuation allowances to persons who have served in an established capacity as their officers, whether their remuneration be computed by weekly wages, poundage or percentage on collection of rates, or annual salary.

Municipal Authorities Education Accounts.

MR. RADFORD: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any steps have been taken by the Board's officers to prepare a form of accounts for town councils under the Education Act, 1902; and if he will consider the advisability of issuing an exemplification and order for accounts to be kept by municipal corporations relating to elementary and higher education at an early date.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Local Government Board issued a circular in May, 1903, to those town councils who were local education authorities, respecting the accounts to be kept by them of their receipts and expenditure under the Education Act, 1902. I do not propose to take further action in the matter whilst the subject of the accounts of local authorities is under the consideration of the Departmental Committee.

Accounts and Regulations of Rural District Councils.

MR. RADFORD: To ask the President of the Local Government Board when it is proposed to issue the order for accounts prescribing the regulations and books to be kept by rural district councils and of their officers; and if he will cause an explanatory memorandum to be issued therewith.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) An order prescribing forms of accounts to be kept by rural district councils and their officers has been prepared, but I do not propose that it should be finally settled pending the completion of the work of the Departmental Committee on the system of accounts to be kept by local authorities. A circular of instructions would, in accordance with the usual practice, be sent with any such order when issued.

Danger to Public Health by use of Second-hand Bottles and Jars.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the complaints expressed by bottle manufacturers against the use of second-hand and discarded jars and bottles; and, seeing that such use involves risks to health and is considered by medical men to be incompatible with good sanitary conditions, whether any existing regulations can be applied by his Department or by local authorities to meet the complaints referred to.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have received some representations on this subject, and, so far as the use of second-hand bottles in the sale of poisons is concerned, I have brought the matter under the notice of the Privy Councils. It does not appear to me that there are any existing regulations which could be applied by the Local Government Board or by local authorities to meet the complaints referred to.

Purchase of Estate of H. L. Montgomery of Toulagee.

MR. DOLAN (Leitrim, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the receiver on the estate of H. L. Montgomery, Toulagee, county Leitrim, has refused to allow Mr. Pat M'Govern of Toulagee the terms of purchase arranged by Judge Ross; and whether he will call the attention of the Land Commission to this fact.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that the reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative. It does not rest with the receiver to allow or disallow the terms of purchase arranged by the judge. A form of application for an advance has been sent by the receiver to Mr. M'Govern for signature, and upon its receipt the Land Commission will give the case full consideration.

Suggested Pension for William Peloe, late of Royal Field Artillery and Imperial Light Horse.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the case of William Peloe, who is at present living in a state of destitution in Stafford's Yard, Longford; whether he is aware that this man has served seventeen years, including seven years in the Royal Field Artillery, five years reserve, and again rejoining the Imperial Light Horse in 1901, to take part in the South African War, in the course of which he had charge of a gun from Maitland camp through the Transvaal, Orange River Colony, and Natal; and will he direct that a pension be awarded to this man, who is at present in very poor circumstances.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The particulars furnished in the Question have not been sufficient to enable the man to be traced. If the hon. Member will be good enough to forward to the War Office full particulars of the case, including the date and cause of the man's discharge from both the Royal Field Artillery and the Imperial Light Horse, the matter shall receive full investigation.

Colour of Army Clothing.

MR. SAMUEL YOUNG (Cavan, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the adoption of a new colour for Army uniforms is now under consideration; whether, when the present khaki drab mixture was adopted, only one firm of woollen manufacturers, Scottish, was consulted and asked to experiment; and whether, in view of the strides made in recent years by Irish woollen manufacturers, especially in the designing of cloths for sporting and kindred purposes they will be granted an opportunity of submitting ideas equally with Scottish and English manufacturers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative. As regards the second part of the Question, the original drab mixture material was made by an English firm and other drab mixture materials now in use have been selected from samples submitted by other English and Scottish firms. As regards the last part of the Question, there is no objection to Irish firms submitting samples of their supplies.

Reports on Russo-Japanese War.

MR. CHARLES SHAW (Stafford): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that, in spite of Great Britain having been represented in the Far East during the late war by no fewer than fourteen specially selected officers, only a few pamphlets have as yet been issued for the instruction of the British Army in the lessons of the Russo-Japanese War; and, seeing that, as a consequence of such delay in publication, British officers have been compelled to have recourse to translations of German works on the same subject, whether he will take steps to hasten the required publications.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A very large number of copies of the reports of the officers attached to the Russian and Japanese forces during the recent war have been distributed to officers of the British Army. These documents were all confidential, and the knowledge of their distribution would therefore not reach my hon. friend.

Nominated Members of the Transvaal Legislative Council — Approval of Home Government.

Mr. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, if the names of the gentlemen nominated to be members of the Legislative Council in the Transvaal were submitted for the approval of, or were communicated to, His Majesty's Ministers in this Country before the appointments were made.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The names were submitted by Lord Selborne for the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies before the appointments were made.

Muara Police Force.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in accordance with a letter which the Secretary of State for the Colonies addressed to His Highness the Rajah of Sarawak in October last, requesting that the police in the employment of the Rajah should be withdrawn on the 1st of January last from the colliery district of Muara, where the Rajah holds in perpetuity a concession of certain rights from the Government of Brunei, under which he is empowered to adjudicate as well as to impose fines throughout the district, this request has been carried into effect by the Rajah; if, when sending this request, the Secretary of State or his advisers in Singapore or Labuan were aware of such terms of the concession as by direct implication called for the creation of a police force by the Rajah; whether arrangements have been made by the Secretary of State to replace these police by an equally efficient force, acquainted with the language of the natives; if so, whether the replacing police force has arrived in Muara, and has been directed to give assistance to the Rajah in carrying out these judicial duties in the Muara district for which he is, or for some years back has been, responsible under the concession referred to; and whether Rajah Brooke has been advised of such arrangements.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Sir C. Brooke stated, on 6th November last, that he had given the necessary instructions for the withdrawal of his police from the Muara district, and I have no reason to suppose that these instructions have not been carried out. The Secretary of State and the High Commissioner for Brunei were aware of the terms of the concessions held by Sir C. Brooke, which do not authorise him to maintain a police force in Brunei. The Secretary of State has not been informed that Brunei police have yet been stationed in the Muara districts, but he has no doubt that the High Commissioner and the British Resident have taken all necessary steps to provide for the maintenance of law and order. Sir C. Brooke's local representatives have doubtless been fully informed of the steps which are being taken.

Petition of the Bandahara of Brunei.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON: To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a petition, signed by the Bandahara of Brunei, who is Acting Regent during the minority of his nephew, the Sultan, and also by other Brunei chiefs, praying that this decaying Sultanate, now an enclave in Sarawak territory, should be relieved from the newly imposed rule which the people of Brunei do not desire, and to which they are unaccustomed, and expressing a reiterated wish to be placed under the rule of Sarawak, has been received by the High Commissioner for the Straits Settlements; and, if so, what reply was sent to such petition.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) No petition has been received by the Secretary of State on this subject. I would refer the hon. Member to a statement which I made in this House on 6th December last† and in which I pointed out that the Bandahara is only one of two joint Regents, and that there is no reason to suppose that any considerable proportion of the people of Brunei desires absorption into Sarawak.

Payment of Claims by British Subjects against the Turkish Government.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, having regard to the increase of income the Turkish Government will receive owing to the 3 per cent. increase in the customs duties, he will instruct the British Ambassador to press for the immediate payment of the admitted claims of British subjects against the Turkish Government, amounting to about £200,000.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Grey.*) The entire additional revenue to be derived from the increase of the Turkish customs duties from 8 per cent. to 11 per cent. has already been earmarked for the service of the Macedonian Budget, and there is no reason to suppose that any part of the increment will be available for other purposes after the requirements of the Budget have been met. The claims in question will, of course, continue to receive attention.

Stamp duty on Irish Land Sales.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether he is aware that, on transfers of registered land in Ireland, stamp duty is assessed not only on the purchase money payable by the purchaser to the registered vendor but also on the amount of the advance by the Land Commission originally for the purchase of the holding from the landlord; is he aware that such a heavy stamp duty operates very injuriously on the free sale of land; and will the Treasury sanction enaction of stamp duty only on the real consideration on sale.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) If the hon. Member will refer to the Answer given by my predecessor on the 28th March 1906 to the hon. Member for West Waterford‡ he will find it is stated that stamp duty is properly charged by reference to Section 57 of The Stamp Act, 1891, not only on the money consideration paid by the transferee, but also on the outstanding portion of any advance made to the purchasing tenant. This provision of the law is not peculiar to Ireland, but is of general application, and affects any property conveyed to any person subject to the payment of any money. There is no ground for changing either the law or the settled practice in such cases. My right hon. friend reaffirmed this reply on several subsequent occasions, and I have nothing to add to it.

Examination for Male Learners in Dublin.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): To ask the Postmaster General, whether it is intended to hold an examination for male learners in Dublin in April next; and, if so, how many vacancies will be reserved for limited section.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) A competition will be held in April next for filling eight male learnerships in Dublin. Four of these vacancies will be reserved for limited competition among persons already in the service.

Motor Cars—Licences and Accidents.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what was the number of registered motor cars in England and Wales in 1906; what number of drivers' licences was issued in 1906; how many persons, not being drivers in or passengers on the motor cars, were in 1906 killed by motor cars; and how many of those killed were killed by public motor vehicles.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I am informed that the Local Government Board have no statistics as to the number of registered motor cars and licensed drivers later than those given in the Report of the Royal Commission, on page 629 of Volume II., from which it appears that on the 30th September 1905 there were in England and Wales 65,705 registered motor vehicles and 84,741 drivers' licences in force. The Registrar-General informs me that the number of deaths in England and Wales registered as caused by motor cars in 1906 cannot be stated until the causes of all the deaths have been tabulated, a process which will not be completed for several months. The weekly Returns furnished by London registrars show 328 deaths in London in 1906 caused by vehicles in the streets, of which sixty-eight were caused by motor vehicles.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxvi., 1556–7.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, cliv., 1288.

Metropolitan Police Pensions.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the position of members of the Metropolitan Police force, as affected by The Police (Superannuation) Act, and Section 32 of The Police Act, 1890, is materially different from that of other police constables; and, if so, in what respects.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) As the Metropolitan Police is a force formed and administered under special Acts of Parliament, the provisions of Section 32 of The Police Act, 1890, were necessary to adapt the Act to the circumstances of that force; but the position of members of the Metropolitan Police is not materially different from that of the members of the other police forces to which the Act of 1890 applies. The hon. Member is aware that by the Acts of 1890 and 1906 certain matters are left to the discretion of the police authority, and in those respects there may of course be some differences of administration in the many different forces.

Local Government Board Circular to West Bridgford Urban District Council.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will cause his letter to the West Bridgford Urban District Council, anent employment of workmen on works for which loans have been obtained, to be circulated amongst local authorities so as to advise them of he change in the policy of his Department in this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My hon. friend is under a misapprehension in supposing that there has been any change of policy on my part in this matter. I have no reason to doubt that the local authorities are aware of the view expressed in the letter referred to in the Question, and it does not seem to me necessary to circulate it amongst them.

Local Authorities and Upkeep of Main Land Drains.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the fact that it is not the duty of any local authority to undertake the cleaning and upkeep of main land drains and dykes, he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation with the object of putting these duties under some local authority.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) This matter appears to be connected with the powers and duties of Commissioners of Sewers and Land Drainage Boards, and I understand that the Royal Commission on Erosion of the Coasts have before them the circumstances of these bodies where they exercise powers on or near to the sea coast. I could not promise legislation without previous communication with my noble friend the President of the Board of Agriculture, and at present it does not appear to me that the time would be opportune for proposing legislation.

Protests against Dogs Act Orders in Salop.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been drawn to the resolutions passed by the urban district council of Newport, the parish council of Shinfal, the urban council of Wem, and the urban council of Wellington, protesting against the recent Order under the Dogs Act by which dogs are not allowed to be out of doors between sunset and sunrise unless under the control of their owners.

by leash or chain; and whether, in view of the inconvenience this Order inflicts upon farmers and others, he will have it withdrawn.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Our attention had not previously been directed to the resolutions to which my hon. friend refers. The Order in question was made by the local authority for the county of Salop, with whom we propose to communicate as to the suggestion made by my hon. friend. I shall be glad to acquaint him with the result.

Railway Accidents—Arrests of Railway Officials.

Mr. BELL (Derby): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether any railway servant or other workman concerned in railway collisions or other railway or industrial accidents, since 1885, has been arrested upon a warrant and criminally indicted before a coroner's inquiry has been held; and, if any, will he give the names, dates, and index to the particulars of each case.

(*Answered by Sir John Walton.*) So far as I can ascertain there does not appear to be any such case of the kind to which the hon. Member refers.

School Teachers' Official Correspondence—Allowance for Postage.

Mr. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthenshire, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether it is customary to allow teachers in elementary schools the cost of postage in replying to official communications from education committees; and whether the Board of Education have issued or intend to issue any instructions in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I have no precise information with regard to the first part of the Question, but I should presume the Answer to be in the affirmative. The Answer to the second paragraph is in the negative.

Welsh Education Department.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the President of the Board of Education if it is his intention to introduce at an early date a Bill to establish a National Council of Education for Wales, or whether the new Welsh Education Department is considered to be in substitution of the promised National Council.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Answer to the first paragraph is in the negative. It is hoped that many of the purposes which such a council might have been expected to serve may be effectively secured by the new Welsh Department of the Board of Education.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: To ask the President of the Board of Education whether the new Welsh Education Department will involve any additional charge on the Exchequer; and, if so, what is the estimated total amount.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The total additional cost to the Exchequer for the year 1907–8 is estimated at £2,050.

The Comptroller and Auditor-General and Navy Appropriation Accounts.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the duty of the Comptroller and Auditor-General under Acts 29 and 30 Vict., 1866, to draw the attention of Parliament, in the Appropriation Accounts, to any failure to spend money for the specific purpose for which it was voted, he will explain why the Navy Appropriation Accounts 1905–6, do not draw attention to the fact that an armoured cruiser was dropped from the programme in the same month as the money was voted, July 1905, and to failures to carry out repairs in ships, such as the "Hannibal," for which sums were set down in the Navy Estimates.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The Comptroller and Auditor-General is not an officer of my Department, and I cannot undertake to answer Questions relating to the manner in which he discharges his statutory duties, for which he is directly responsible to Parliament through the Public Accounts Committee. I may, however, point out that the Dockyard Expense Accounts, 1905–6, with the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Report thereon, have not yet been published.

Mr. BELLAIRS: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that in the Appropriation Account, 1905–6, the Comptroller and Auditor-General draws the attention of Parliament to the fact that firms were entrusted with the building of three cruisers of the "Invincible" class, costing £5,194,368 without any other firms being invited to tender; and whether he will publish the correspondence that passed between the Auditor-General and the Admiralty as to the reasons for this deviation from accepted practice, having regard to the fact that the representative of the Admiralty in the House of Commons refused to offer any explanation last session.

(*Answered by Mr Asquith.*) I have no direct access to the records of either the Board of Admiralty or the Comptroller and Auditor-General, both of whom are directly responsible to Parliament. The matter will presumably be dealt with by the Public Accounts Committee, to whom the House has referred the Navy Appropriation Account, 1905–6, with the Report thereon of the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

Working of Clause 3 of the Indian Contract Act Amendment Act.

Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India has made any Report to the India Office upon the working of Clause 3 of the Indian Contract Act Amendment Act, whereby special reference was made in illustration (b) to the case of the Indian agriculturist; and whether, if the Answer be in the negative, he will ask the said Government to call for Reports from provincial administrations upon this subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative. I am afraid that formal Reports of the nature suggested would involve a laborious examination of the decisions of Courts of all grades, and as at present advised I doubt the necessity for calling for them from the local governments. But I will ask the Government of India to let me have any information on the subject which may be available.

Condition of the Royal Canal, Ireland.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state if any meeting of the Board of Control, which was reconstructed last year, has been recently held; whether he can state what steps are being taken to have the Royal Canal put in proper navigable condition; whether he is aware that complaints have been made by traders and boat owners stating that men working at repairs had been withdrawn; and whether he will compel the necessary work to be done.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The last meeting of the Board of Control was held on 20th February, when certain complaints were considered and action was decided upon. The complaints did not include any from traders or boat owners. The Board have recently made a communication to the Lord-Lieutenant upon the subject of the condition of the Royal Canal, and the question of the further action to be taken is under consideration.

Power of Water Bailiffs to Search.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Water Bailiff Cornelius Coffey, of Boherboy, county Cork, was empowered to search the coat pockets of a youth named Hudner on the 23rd instant near Kanturk; and whether a copy of the warrant entitling Coffey to continue such conduct will be published for the guidance of anglers in the Kanturk and other districts.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The hon. Member raises a question of law upon which I am not prepared to offer an opinion. The matter is one for the decision of a Court of Law. The powers of water bailiffs are set forth in the Act 5 and 6 Vic., cap. 106, section 86, and not in the warrants of such bailiffs.

Clones Loan Fund.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there are considerable funds at present to the credit of the Clones (county Monaghan) Loan Fund, and debenture holders are much in need of money; and will he say when the Loan Fund Board anticipate that at any rate a dividend will be paid to the debenture holders.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Loan Fund Board inform me that the amount at present to the credit of the Clones Loan Fund is £242, but not all of it is available for distribution. Over £1,000 still remains outstanding, and the receiver is endeavouring to obtain further payments. The Board do not think it desirable to direct the payment of a further dividend at present. A former dividend at 4s. in the pound amounted to £440.

Irish Local Government Board and Architects' Fees.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to a resolution of the Ulster Society of Architects complaining that the fees fixed by the Local Government Board for architectural work in connection with the Labourers' (Ireland) Acts are such as to exclude properly qualified architects; and whether, as the State has to look to the buildings under the Act as security for the moneys advanced, he will endeavour to have a more generous scale of fees substituted so that the local authorities may not be driven to the employment of untrained and incompetent persons as architects.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The resolution has been received. The scale of fees for architectural work was fixed by the Local Government Board after very careful consideration, and no circumstance has arisen showing a necessity for increasing the fees. As a matter of fact, many highly qualified architects have applied to rural district councils for employment at less than the maximum fee fixed by the Board.

Intergrading of Irish National Schoo Teachers.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have considered the effect on old teachers of the rule as to intergrading in connection with obtaining an increase in salary; and whether the Commissioners could vary such rule so that it would not be applicable to teachers of twenty years service.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that there is no special rule in regard to the promotion of the teachers known as intergrade teachers. The promotion of these teachers is governed by the general rules, and the Commissioners do not think it practicable or desirable to make any exceptional rules for the promotion of such teachers upon the mere ground of length of service.

Sale of the Estate of Late Robert H. W. Heard.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants on the estate of the representatives of the late Robert H. W. Heard, situate at Longhill, Kilcommon, county Tipperary, signed agreements to purchase under the Land Act in the year 1904; and if he can say when the sale of the estate will be completed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Purchase agreements in respect of this estate were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in May, 1905. An inspector will shortly visit the lands, but the Commissioners cannot say definitely when the sale will be completed. The case will be dealt with in order of priority.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Pay of the First Sea Lord.

*MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any special application was made by letter from the Board of Admiralty to the Treasury for the half-pay of the First

Sea Lord to be fixed at £2,000 per annum when, as stated on page 158 of the Navy Estimates, the correct half-pay of an Admiral of the Fleet is £1,222 15s.; and what special circumstances guided the Treasury in making this increase, while Navy Estimates in all other directions were being cut down.

I beg also to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the pay of the First Sea Lord from all sources is £3,865 per annum, in addition to a house in Queen Anne's Gate; whether he is aware that this marks an increase of £1,143 above what was paid to the previous occupant of the post, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Walter Kerr; whether he can state the special circumstances under which the First Sea Lord's half-pay was increased from £1,222 15s. to £2,000; whether an Order in Council appeared in the *London Gazette*; and, if so, on what date.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Answer to the first and second parts of the Question addressed to me is in the affirmative. The present rate of half-pay is fixed by Order in Council of the 8th January, 1906, which provides for its issue to an Admiral of the Fleet holding the office of First Sea Lord who has rendered exceptional and special service. The reply to the last part of the Question is in the negative. In reply to the other Question the Treasury signified their concurrence before the Order in Council was obtained.

*MR. BELLAIRS: Is it not the rule for Orders in Council to be published in the *Gazette*.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I have nothing to do with that; I think the Privy Council is responsible.

*MR. BELLAIRS: In fixing the grant did the Board take into account what the First Sea Lord had already received in the way of extra remuneration by being specially promoted to Admiral of the Fleet when the time came for his retirement?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: All the facts were taken into consideration.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): Does the increase in the stipend carry with it a corresponding increase in the retiring allowance?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I will inquire.

Supplementary Officers in the Royal Navy.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if his attention has been drawn to the position of the supplementary officers in the Royal Navy; and whether, considering the difficulty in utilising their services, owing to their seniority, the Admiralty will consider the advisability of retiring all such officers on a reasonable pension.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: This question is engaging the attention of the Admiralty, but the difficulties in the way of revising the scheme of pension under which these officers entered are considerable, and I cannot give any pledge at present.

Cap Ribbons for Seamen.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Board have yet decided to issue two cap ribbons free of charge to seamen and stokers, in view of the frequency with which they are moved from ship to ship and the consequent expenditure out of their pay.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Yes, Sir, from the beginning of the next financial year.

Sale of London Defences.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether when the London defences are sold and the money realised placed to the Army Account, steps are taken to write off completely out of Revenue the outstanding debts which their construction originally involved.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Of the total expenditure of £160,000 the sum of £60,000 was defrayed out of the annual estimates, and the sum of £15,000 out of a loan which has been completely redeemed. The remaining £85,000 which was defrayed out of the Military Works Loan is being written off *pari passu* with other expenditure under that loan.

MR. WEDGWOOD asked if it would not be more consonant with sound finance to write off the asset against the deficit?

MR. HALDANE said these were very short sinking funds and they had been paying off a large portion recently.

War Office Buildings on Eltham Common.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his Department proposes to erect buildings upon any portion of Eltham Common.

MR. HALDANE: A proposal to erect buildings for the Royal Army Medical Corps on Eltham Common is receiving consideration, but no definite decision has as yet been reached.

Army Instruction.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the great improvement resulting to Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteer corps by the appointment, about 1875, for a limited term, of young and smart Regular officers as adjutants, acquainted with the latest developments in the military art, and able to devote all their time to military duty; if he proposes to withdraw them from the suggested territorial Army and replace them by fourteen major-generals; and if the permanent staff of sergeants-instructor will be withdrawn.

MR. HALDANE: I intend in introducing the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill to deal with the general question of the instruction of the territorial forces. Perhaps, therefore, the hon. and gallant Member will permit me to defer answering the points raised in his Question.

The Woolwich Explosion.

MR. A. L. STANLEY (Cheshire, Eddisbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his scientific advisers are of opinion that cordite cannot be made to detonate, and that if dynamite is lighted it will detonate, and in the millionth of a second the whole thing is resolved into its elements and everything around is shattered; whether two kilogrammes of iodide of nitrogen were stored in the research laboratory at Woolwich; whether this substance, if kept in a moist state, cannot easily be detonated; whether this substance can be kept at all in a dry state; and whether he has any information to give the House as to the cause of the explosion that took place in the research laboratory at Woolwich.

MR. HALDANE: It is doubtful whether cordite can be detonated, but if it is possible the circumstances must be exceptional. Dynamite if lighted cannot be detonated unless it is confined. There was no iodide of nitrogen in the research laboratory in the chemical research magazine. It can be detonated under water, and cannot be kept in a dry state. An inquiry is being held as to the cause of the explosion at Woolwich.

The Yeomanry.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether yeomen enlisted before the new Army scheme is adopted will, in the event of its adoption, have their pay and allowances reduced, or whether they will be allowed to serve their three years upon the scale of pay in force at the time of their enlistment.

MR. HALDANE: Until the schemes are worked out in detail I cannot give precise detailed Answers to Questions of this character, but of course any yeoman will, if called up for training, receive the pay and allowances for which he contracted.

Army Council and the Territorial Army.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the representation of the Territorial Army on the Army Council has been considered; and, if so, whether he can make any statement on the subject to the House on the introduction of the proposed Bill.

MR. HALDANE: I am not at present in a position to give any details in regard to the manner in which this will be effected.

Service and Proficiency Pay.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith) on behalf of the hon. Member for the Ealing Division of Middlesex: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the new system of service and proficiency pay will effect any; and approximately what, economy during the official year 1907–8.

MR. HALDANE: One of the principal features of proficiency pay is that it depends in every case upon the attainment of certain standards of skill in Musketry or other Military qualifications. The new rules will doubtless effect some saving in 1907–8; but until experience has been gained of their effect upon the average standard of skill reached by the soldier, it is not practicable to give any reliable estimate of the amount.

Indigo Dyes.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether tests recently made by experts at Cawnpore regarding the relative merits of natural and synthetic indigos, resulted in proving the superiority in all respects of the natural dye; and, if so, whether he will take steps to make generally known these results, in order to counteract reported results of laboratory tests to the contrary effect, widely published, to the detriment of an important British-Indian industry.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I have not heard that such tests have been made at Cawnpore. The Indian newspapers so far as we can ascertain make no reference to the subject.

Indian Co-operative Credit Societies.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will lay Papers showing the progress of co-operative credit societies in India, and whether success has attended this new departure.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: I have received from the Government of India, a memorandum, based on the published Reports of the provincial registrars, showing the progress made, and I shall be happy to lay it on the Table if my hon. friend will move for it. The figures indicate satisfactory progress. The Government of India report that general interest in the movement has been displayed by all classes.

Railway Rolling Stock in India.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether, in view of the bumper crop of rice, seeds and wheat, the Budget allotment of Rs.382 lakhs for railway waggons has been wholly expended, and will be followed, notwithstanding the reduction of the total provision for railways, by a larger estimate for the coming financial year, and whether two mills at Howrah have recently been closed owing to the want of sufficient wagons for coal traffic.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: I am unable to state how much of the current year's allotment for provision of rolling stock has so far been expended. The grant for 1907–1908 is, as stated in my replies to recent questions, larger than that for the current year, notwithstanding the reduction in the total provision for railways. I have seen a statement in the public press that two mills at Howrah have recently been closed owing to the want of sufficient wagons for coal traffic, but I have no other information on the subject.

Indian Taxpayers and the Army Estimates.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Army Estimates, in so far as they affect the Indian taxpayer, are settled by the War Office without communication with the Indian Office.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: The Army Estimates of the home Government seldom affect the Indian taxpayer, and they are therefore ordinarily prepared without communication with the Indian Office. On exceptional occasions, when provision is made for a measure (such as an increase in the rate of pay of British soldiers) appreciably affecting the Indian taxpayer, the Secretary of State for India is consulted. No necessity for any such consultation has arisen in the present year.

Army Estimates and India.

*Mr. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Army Estimates in so far as they relate to India, make the usual provision for the protection of the Indian Empire, of its Anglo-Indian and British-Indian inhabitants, and of the British-Indian frontiers.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: The Answer is in the affirmative.

Prison Treatment of Indian Journalists.

Dr. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has any official reports showing that the proprietor and the editor of the *Punjabi* were handcuffed and chained, compelled to grind Indian corn, and otherwise maltreated in gaol; and whether he will give orders that no political prisoners shall receive such treatment in the future.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: So far as I am at present aware, the proprietor and editor of the *Punjabi* were, after conviction, treated in all respects as ordinary prisoners. I am making inquiry, and expect further information as to details.

Cabling Minister's Speeches to South Africa.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the total cost of the cablegrams despatched from the Colonial Office to South Africa in the year 1906; how many of his own speeches were so cabled; of how many words they consisted; whether the cabling was paid for by himself or by the British taxpayer, or carried forward for payment on delivery; and if his speech of 19th February, relating to the approaching Imperial Conference has been cabled to the statesmen of the Empire.

The UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N. W.): The total cost of cablegrams despatched from the Colonial Office to South Africa in 1906 was £3,648, but the hon. and gallant Member must not debit me with a liability for the whole of that sum. Five telegrams were sent containing summaries or extracts from my speeches amounting to about 3,400 words in code, and the speech of 19th February was not among them. These telegrams were sent at the public expense for the reasons already explained by my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this House, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies in another place. The hon. and gallant Member refrains from asking the cost of these telegrams, but perhaps the House will allow me to say that it only amounted to about £200 out of the £3,648.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT asked whether the amount of £200 had been passed by the Auditor-General, or surcharged to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. CHURCHILL: It has not been surcharged to me, and I do not think it is likely to be.

Army and Navy Expenditure in the Colonies.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what, according to the latest figures available, is the total naval and military expenditure per head of the population incurred by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, of Canada, of Australia, and of New Zealand, respectively.

Mr. CHURCHILL: According to the latest figures available, the total naval and military expenditure per head of the population of European descent is in Canada, 4s. 8d.; in Australia, 5s. 1d.; and in New Zealand, 5s. 4d. I understand that the expenditure per head in the United Kingdom is about 30s.

Sir Alexander Swettenham.

Mr. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Sir Alexander Swettenham, the Governor of Jamaica, has tendered his resignation; if he has, on what date did he tender it, and upon what grounds; what action has been taken upon it; and can he state when the Papers with reference to it will be laid before the House.

Mr. CHURCHILL: On the 23rd January, Sir A. Swettenham applied for permission to retire from duty on the ground of age. The Governor was given an opportunity of continuing to hold office, but informs the Secretary of State in a telegram just received that he has decided not to do so. When the Papers are complete the Secretary of State will determine what it is in the public interest to publish.

British Indian Traders at Ladysmith.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the refusal by the borough licensing officer of Ladysmith of renewals to shop licences to M. A. Goga, Bennee, and S. A. Rahine, three established British-Indian storekeepers of that town, under the powers conferred by the Traders' Licensing Act of 1897; whether he is acquainted with any instances of refusal to European storekeepers of shop licences under the Act; if not, whether he will inquire whether there has ever been such an instance; and whether he will inquire into the reasons for the refusals in question and remind the Government of Natal of the necessity of administering this law impartially to both European and Indian traders.

MR. CHURCHILL: Inquiry shall be made with regard to these particular cases, to which my attention had not previously been called. As I have already stated, the Secretary of State is in communication with the Government of Natal regarding the administration of the Act.

New Hebrides Convention.

MR. MOORE (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if it is possible to make any alteration in the prescribed conditions of adult and child labour, male and female, in the New Hebrides, as desired by many Members of this House, without the concurrence of the French Government.

MR. CHURCHILL: Like all international agreements, the New Hebrides Convention can only be altered with the consent of both the parties.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if any communication passed between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Fiji before or after the ratification of the New Hebrides Convention; and if he will lay Papers on the subject.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State has been in frequent communication with the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific (whom no doubt the hon. Member means to indicate) both before and after the signature of the New Hebrides Convention; but it is not intended to publish the correspondence, as it was for the most part of a confidential nature. The views of the High Commissioner on certain points of the Convention can be gathered from the despatch printed on pages 53–56 of the recent Blue-book.

Trinidad Labour for the Panama Canal.

SIR WILLIAM BULL: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Ealing Division of Middlesex, I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies under what Ordinance and under whose authority labourers from Trinidad have been recruited to work on the Panama Canal.

MR. CHURCHILL: The recruiting did not take place under the provisions of any particular Ordinance, but the Colonial Government might, had they chosen, have placed it under the restrictions of the Foreign Labour Contract Ordinance. These restrictions were waived, on condition of the form of contract to be entered into by the labourers being submitted to the Colonial Government for approval.

Transvaal Upper Chamber.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Lord Selborne took into consideration the political views of those nominated to the Upper House; in whose names the two protests with regard to the constitution of that House were sent; what answers, if any, were returned to those protests; and whether General Botha took any part in the movement designed to obtain a reconsideration of those nominations.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Answer to the first point in the Question is in the affirmative. I gather that letters on the subject were addressed to Lord Selborne by Het Volk and the National Association, but I cannot say in whose names they were sent, or whether General Botha was a signatory. The Governor informs me that he replied as follows:—"I have replied that nominations have been settled with the greatest care and with your full concurrence and duly gazetted, and that I can hold out no expectation whatever of revision. I have added that I am satisfied that Legislative Councillors will perform their task impartially and justly, with a single eye to the welfare of the Transvaal and South Africa, without regard to the particular interests of any one race or Party, and that proof of their suitability will be found in their practical work."

MR. ALDEN asked whether there was any possibility of obtaining information with regard to the political denomination of some of the gentlemen who had been nominated.

MR. CHURCHILL: The usual channels are open, I suppose, to my hon. friend for inquiring into their character and *status*.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies is aware that the appointments to the Second Chamber in the Transvaal recommended by Lord Selborne have been received with wide dissatisfaction in the Colony; and whether he inquired upon whose advice Lord Selborne acted in making the recommendations before he ratified them.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State is aware that criticisms have been made, but he has no evidence of the "wide dissatisfaction" referred to by my hon. friend. He did not inquire upon whose advice Lord Selborne recommended these gentlemen; he felt confident the Governor would be well advised before he submitted any recommendations to the Secretary of State. My noble friend further considered the nominations independently in the light of the information about persons and Parties in the Transvaal possessed by the Colonial Office, and the list as published represents the choice of His Majesty's Government as well as that of the High Commissioner. I may add that there can be no question of its being revised or modified in any way. No powers exist under the Constitution for effecting such revision, and were such powers available His Majesty's Government would not propose to employ them.

*MR. MACKARNESS asked whether the political views of the majority of those appointed to the Upper Chamber were in harmony with those of the majority of the Lower House, or the reverse.

MR. CHURCHILL: The appointment of the Upper Chamber was made without reference to the election, and before the election took place. No constitutional conflict need, I think, be apprehended; but should such conflict arise the Constitution provides full machinery whereby the representative Assembly can make its will prevail over the will of the Second Chamber.

Emigration Literature.

MR. HILLS (Durham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the Emigrants' Information Office, an institution supported by public money, issues a handbook extolling the advantages of the United States as a field for emigration; and whether he will consider the advisability of not spending public money in advertising the merits of a foreign country, seeing that many of the British Colonies are urgently in need of population, more particularly population of British origin.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is the duty of the Emigrants' Information Office to give useful and trustworthy information to intending emigrants to the British Colonies and elsewhere. The attention of the office is chiefly directed to the British Colonies, but the Secretary of State cannot think it right to deny accurate information to emigrants from this country who deliberately desire to make a new home in the United States.

Jamaica Earthquake—Government Grant.

MR. GIBBS (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Imperial Government intend to make a grant to Jamaica to help in the rebuilding of Kingston.

MR. CHURCHILL: The question whether His Majesty's Government can give financial assistance to the Island of Jamaica for the relief of sufferers by the recent earthquake is still under consideration, and no definite reply can yet be given.

New Hebrides—Labour for New Caledonia.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, under the Convention with France regarding the New Hebrides, this Government has any control over, or responsibility for, natives recruited in the islands for New Caledonia, or if it is within the power of either party to the Convention, or both together, to specify the nature of the conditions under which natives may be recruited for work outside the islands, or define, or co-operate in defining, the regulations to be applied to the daily labour, housing, food, medical attendance, hours of work, or any fines and penalties to be imposed outside the New Hebrides.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Answer to the first part of the hon. Member's Question is in the negative. No vessel can recruit natives in the New Hebrides without a licence from one of the two High Commissioners or their delegates; and it is within the power of these officers to refuse licences to recruit for work outside the group, unless they are satisfied that such work will be conducted under proper conditions.

Chicago Meat Packing Scandals.

SIR WILLIAM BULL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has now had time to examine Consul Finn's Report, despatched on the 14th May last, *re* the meat-packing establishments in Chicago; and if he will now see fit to lay it upon the Table.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury, for Sir EDWARD GREY): As the hon. Member was informed on the 31st October last, the Report was sent to the Local Government Board. It is not proposed to publish it.

Commercial Treaty with Germany.

MR. HILLS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the German Government can, without notice, terminate the most-favoured-nation arrangement between Germany and the United Kingdom, or, if notice is required, what is the nature of such notice.

MR. RUNCIMAN: No notice is required; but it is not to be expected that none would be given.

Trawling in the Moray Firth.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is now in communication with the Norwegian Government with a view to uphold the decision of the High Court of Justiciary that beam or otter trawling in the Moray Firth is illegal, whether practised by foreign or British trawlers; and if he has not yet taken any such action will he state the reason.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The Act of Parliament as interpreted by the High Court of Justiciary is in conflict with international law. My right hon. friend has received a communication from the Norwegian Minister, stating that orders have been issued to warn all owners of Norwegian trawlers fishing in the Moray Firth to cease from doing so, and not to expect the support of their Government in case of proceedings being taken against them in Scotland. It is added that by this attitude the Norwegian Government do not give up the right possessed by Norwegians in common with other foreign vessels, according to international law, of fishing off the coasts of this country outside territorial waters. The step which they have now taken is a provisional measure to remove as far as possible the present difficulties, and to avoid a repetition of the cases which have occurred, until a final arrangement may be reached. My right hon. friend hopes the hon. Member will recognise, as His Majesty's Government have done, the friendly attitude which the Norwegian Government have observed.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Are we to understand that natives of Norway trawling in the Moray Firth will in future be prosecuted or liable to prosecution?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I cannot answer that Question.

Qualifications for Parliamentary Franchise.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state at what age the right to vote in legislative elections begins in the different countries of the world possessing Parliamentary Government.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The latest available information respecting the qualifications for the Parliamentary franchise in foreign countries will be found in a Paper (Miscellaneous, No. 1 C3665) presented to Parliament in 1883.

In answer to Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.),

MR. GLADSTONE admitted that the information was rather antiquated.

MR. HAROLD COX: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman bring it up to date?

MR. GLADSTONE: I will communicate with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the subject.

Private Elementary Schools.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to a case in which Mr. Fordham, the magistrate on the hearing of a summons on school attendance, declared that the woman prosecuted could not send her child to a private school; and whether he proposes to take any steps, by legislation or otherwise, to deal with such cases.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have made inquiry, and am asked by the magistrate to say that he has never made such a statement as is attributed to him. If the case referred to is one heard at the North London Police Court on the 19th ultimo, the mother of a child had in that case refused to send her to any school except to a private school, which was not efficient and from which the child could absent herself without difficulty whenever her mother wanted her at home. The magistrate pointed out that attendance at a school of this character is no sufficient compliance with the Act.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Who is the judge of the efficiency of the school?

MR. GLADSTONE: I suppose the magistrate satisfied himself as to that.

Laundries in Religious Institutions.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a Bill dealing with the inspection of laundries in connection with religious institutions will be introduced before Easter.

MR. GLADSTONE: I hope so, Sir.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): Will the Government use their enormous majority to push this measure through?

[No Answer was returned.]

Illegal Overtime.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether in order to diminish the amount of illegal overtime, he will allow assistant inspectors throughout the country to visit any factory during hours which appear to be illegal, in the same way as is now the case in cotton districts where time-cribbing is alleged to have been practised.

MR. GLADSTONE: Under the arrangements which I have approved and which I have explained in my Answer to a question of the hon. Member the other day, the Inspector in charge of a district will be able to assign to an assistant the duty of visiting any factory or class of factories in which illegal overtime is suspected to prevail.

Non-Poisonous Matches.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that Messrs. Morlands have a patent for the manufacture of non-poisonous matches; and whether, in view of the number of fatal cases which have recently occurred at this factory, the Home Office will bring powers to bear for the purpose of inducing the firm to discard the use of yellow phosphorus.

MR. GLADSTONE: Messrs. Morland state that the market for the two kinds of matches is different, and that the demand for matches with white phosphorus would not be met by the supply of the other kind. The manufacture of matches with white phosphorus is already under a set of special rules. A recent Report upon the question has been laid upon the Table and will be issued in a few days. Further action is under consideration, but I am not yet in a position to say exactly the steps I shall take.

Factory Inspectors' Staff.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, why an appointment has been made to the staff of factory inspectors upon examinations designed for the Home and Indian Civil Services; whether, when these examinations were advertised, it was stated than an appointment to the factory inspectors' staff would be made from them; why the usual means of filling vacancies in the staff were not adopted in this case; and why the appointment in question carries with it an extra allowance, in addition to the ordinary salary of a junior inspector, of £50 a year.

MR. GLADSTONE: The post filled by this appointment is that of Secretary to the Chief Inspector of Factories, which has been newly created in order to give the chief inspector assistance in dealing with the mass of clerical work falling upon him, as for example, in preparing the material for the Annual Report. The post requires special qualifications, and after inquiry the most suitable candidate was found among the successful competitors in the Home and Indian Civil Service examination, and was appointed with the authority of the Treasury. The Answer to the second part of the Question is in the negative, and the third part is covered by what I have already said. As regards the fourth part, secretarial duties such as those attached to the new post involve extra work and responsibilities, which it is usual to recognise by a special allowance.

Railway Charges for Reserving Seats.

MR. W. R. REA (Scarborough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the practice, recently instituted on certain railway lines, of making a charge for reserving seats in advance, this charge amounting, in effect, to an increase in the fares; and whether he proposes to take any steps, by legislation or otherwise, to prevent the spread of the practice.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport): The Board of Trade have recently become aware that at least one railway company is making a charge for reserving seats on one of its express trains. I consider the practice an objectionable one. As to whether such a charge is legal or illegal I am not at present in a position to say, but I am making inquiries.

Speed Indicators on Tube Electric Railways.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether a speed indicator showing highest speed run is in use on the trains of the various tube electric railways in London; whether the Board of Trade regulations provide for a maximum speed; and, if so, what is that speed.

MR. KEARLEY: A speed indicator is not in use on any of the London tube railways. No limit of speed has been prescribed by the Board of Trade on such railways.

Tube Railways—Precautions against Fire.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state whether there is any automatic arrangement for cutting off the electric current in the event of accident or fire on the tube electric railways of London and other electric lines in this country.

MR. KEARLEY: The Answer is in the negative, and the electrical adviser of the Board of Trade recommends that automatic arrangements for this purpose are not desirable. He is, however, considering the question of the improvement of existing arrangements to meet possible emergencies.

Mullingar and Sligo Railway.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any periodical inspection is made of the permanent way on the Midland Great Western Railway line between Mullingar and Sligo; whether he is aware that, owing to defective rails and bad couplings, great vibration and dangerous rocking occurs at several points on the journey; whether any Report except that of the officials is received or made on the state of the line; and whether an independent inspection can be ordered by the Board of Trade.

MR. KEARLEY: The responsibility for the proper maintenance of a line of railway which has already been opened for traffic rests entirely with the company concerned, and the Board of Trade have no power to make an inspection as suggested. They have been in communication with the company, who deny the statements in the Question as to the rails and couplings, and state that the portion of lines referred to is in good order.

Midland and Great Western Railway of Ireland.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the manner in which employees of the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland are at present being overworked; whether he is aware that signalmen, guards, and engine drivers are kept on duty from twelve to fourteen hours at a stretch without remission; whether a guard leaving Sligo at 5.45 a.m. has to take the 9.15 return train from Dublin back to Sligo at 2.30 p.m., and may then be called on to take the 3.45 p.m. back to Mullingar without extra wages; whether any power exists to have men who are engaged in dangerous and responsible positions of this kind given reasonable time in which to discharge their duties; and will he cause an inquiry to be made generally into the working of this line in the interest of the health and lives of the workers as well as the safety of the travelling public.

MR. KEARLEY: No recent complaint of the hours of work on this line has been received, but if any specific representations as to excessive hours are made by or on behalf of the men concerned, on receipt of such representations inquiry will be made.

Lascars on British Ships.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that, when the Austrian-Lloyd steamer "Imperatrix" was wrecked on the coast of Crete, the lascars who were members of the crew became panic stricken, and were with difficulty kept in order by their officers; and whether he will say what steps, if any, are taken to secure that on British ships employing lascars there is a sufficient proportion of Europeans in the crew to insure the proper working of the ship in emergencies.

MR. KEARLEY: I have seen newspaper reports, but have no official information with regard to the case to which the hon. Member refers. It has not been found necessary to lay down regulations prescribing the proportions of Europeans to lascars to be carried on British ships. Many instances are on record of acts of conspicuous gallantry at sea on the part of lascars, the majority of whom are British subjects.

MR. ASHLEY: Is it not the fact that when the lascars get into a cold climate, such as prevails in the English Channel, they are physically unable to withstand its rigours?

MR. KEARLEY: Some of their acts of heroism have, I happen to know, been performed in a cold climate.

Colonial Draft Tariffs.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will arrange that in the future the draft tariffs of the Colonies shall be submitted to the Commercial Intelligence Committee, as is done with the draft tariffs of foreign countries.

MR. KEARLEY: My right hon. friend will consider this suggestion, but as at present advised, he is somewhat doubtful of its expediency. Of course, Colonial tariff proposals are carefully examined by the Board of Trade.

Germany and Canada.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that any arrangement between Canada and Germany whereby the surtax was removed would, in the absence of a reciprocal arrangement for mutual preference between Canada and Great Britain, diminish by one-half the preference we now enjoy as against Germany; and, seeing that this is a matter of urgent importance, especially in the textile districts of this country which have derived benefit from the surtax, what action he proposes to take.

Mr. KEARLEY: I have no information which would lead us to suppose that the Canadian Government is about to make the arrangement suggested in the Question; but, should it consider such a step desirable, there appears no reason why it should necessitate any action on the part of the Board of Trade.

Teachers in Non-provided Schools—Salaries.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what is the amount of the salaries paid to teachers in non-provided schools in which religious teaching is given according to the doctrines of the Church of England, of the Church of Rome, of the Wesleyan body, and of all other denominations respectively.

The following Questions were answered at the same time:—

Sir EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state how many teachers were employed in non-provided schools during the years ending, respectively, the 31st day of March, 1905, and the 31st day of March, 1906; how many of those teachers were employed to give religious instruction which would not have been permissible in provided schools; and the amount paid by way of salaries during the years above named to the teachers so employed to give such religious instruction.

Lord EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester): To ask the President of the Board of Education what is the estimated amount payable by the managers of Roman Catholic schools to local education authorities in respect of the Education (Special Religious Instruction) Bill during the financial year ending 31st March, 1907.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): I hope very shortly to lay upon the Table a statement showing the number of teachers (excluding pupil teachers and supplementary teachers) employed during the statistical year ended on 31st July, 1906, in voluntary schools classified under the heads of Church of England, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Jewish, and undenominational, together with the total amounts paid to them by local education authorities in respect of salaries. The number of teachers employed in giving special religious instruction, as defined by the Bill now before the House, must depend entirely on the arrangement of the staff in each school for the purposes of religious instruction. This is a matter under the sole control of the managers, about which I have no information. For this reason, while it is impossible for the Board of Education to give any estimate of the total liabilities which will be imposed on the managers under the Bill, I think that the managers who arrange the syllabus of religious instruction and the methods under which that instruction is given can themselves estimate the effect of those arrangements in respect of finance.

Mr. MOORE: Is there any reason for ignoring the English Presbyterian Schools?

Mr. McKENNA: No reason whatever.

Mr. MOORE: Will the Return include them?

Mr. McKENNA: Yes.

Expenditure on Non-Provided Schools.

Lord R. CECIL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can say approximately what has been the amount spent annually for alterations and repairs on non-provided schools since the Education Act, 1902, came into operation.

Mr. McKENNA: I have no information on this matter, and in view of the fact that a considerable number of voluntary schools are the property of private owners who have executed the necessary repairs through their own employees, I fear no statistics sufficiently complete or reliable to be of any value are obtainable.

LORD R. CECIL: Can the right hon. Gentleman give any idea of the amount spent on schools not belonging to private owners?

MR. McKENNA: I have no information.

LORD R. CECIL: Will the right hon. Gentleman get it?

MR. McKENNA: I cannot promise. I will consider the point.

Welsh Education Department.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, whether Mr. Alfred T. Davies, the Chief of the new Welsh Department, has any special or exceptional qualifications for this position; and whether, before his appointment, Mr. Davies had had any professional or other experience specially fitting him for educational work.

MR. McKENNA: Yes, I am happy to think that, in addition to his strong personal qualifications for the post, including therein an intimate knowledge of Wales, of Welsh educational administrators, and of the Welsh point of view on education, Mr. A. T. Davies has further had long and varied practical experience of educational administration himself, both as one of the Governors of the University College of Wales, a member of the Denbighshire Education Committee, and the organiser of a scheme of technical instruction in Lancashire. He has also been closely connected with the administration of Evening Continuation Classes and has made a special study of the treatment of various educational problems in foreign countries. Mr. Davies has had considerable and successful legal experience which will be highly useful to the Board of Education in that department of its work with which he will mostly be concerned.

AN HON. MEMBER: Does Mr. Davies belong to North Wales or South Wales?

MR. McKENNA: As far as I know he comes from Liverpool.

MR. BOWLES: Was one of his personal qualifications on which the right hon. gentleman relies to be found in the fact that for some years he consistently defied in Wales the law which it will now be his duty to administer?

MR. McKENNA: No, Sir, that was not one of his qualifications. I was not aware of the fact.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): Has he an extensive knowledge of the Welsh language?

MR. McKENNA: I cannot say.

Manchester School Meal Depots.

MR. KELLEY (Manchester, S.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the Manchester Education Committee is utilising the police stations as depots for the supply of meals to school children under the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906; and whether, in view of the fact that such action is calculated to restrict the usefulness of the measure by preventing self-respecting citizens, though poor, from permitting their children to take meals in such places, he will take such steps as may be considered necessary to prevent a continuance of such practice.

MR. McKENNA: I am aware that the Manchester Education Committee are at present using the parade-rooms of three police stations for serving meals under the Provision of Meals Act, but the inference which the hon. Member draws appears to me to be one which can only be tested by experience. If the local authority are satisfied that the hon. Member's anticipations have been realised, I have no doubt that they will discontinue the arrangement, but it is not a matter for the intervention of the Board of Education.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON: Does the right hon. Gentleman consider it a desirable arrangement, even if only temporary?

MR. McKENNA: It is a matter solely for the local authority, and I should deprecate being asked to express a personal opinion under the circumstances.

American Mails.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that the proposed alteration by the White Star Line in not calling at Queenstown will have the effect of delaying delivery in Glasgow of the American mail from 7.50 a.m. on Wednesdays to 6 p.m., thus entailing the loss weekly of an entire day to the commerce of that city; and if he will take steps to avert this loss.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): As I recently stated in this House, I have no control over the movements of packets bringing mails from the United States to this country; but I am having the whole matter carefully examined in order that I may be in a position to decide whether it is desirable to make representations on the subject to the United States Government. I do not think, however, that in any case the amount of delay anticipated by the hon. Member will take place.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that as a result of a careful calculation made by the Cork Chamber of Commerce the delay has been found to be as stated in the Question?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am shortly to receive a deputation on the subject, when no doubt the facts will be brought out.

Parliamentary Publications.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he intends to appoint a Sessional Committee to supervise the amount of matter printed and the distribution of official publications, as recommended by the Select Committee of 1906.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have the authority of the Prime Minister for stating that notice of a Motion will be given at an early date for the appointment of such a Committee.

Consolidated Fund Charges.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can arrange that a statement of the estimated expenditure coming under the head of Consolidated Fund charges for the ensuing financial year shall be each year laid upon the Table at about the same time as the Civil Service Estimates are laid and in approximately the same form.

MR. RUNCIMAN: It would be contrary to the usage of this House to publish particulars relating to the finance of the coming year in anticipation of the Budget. An exception has to be made to this rule in the case of the Estimates for supply services, which are presented as early as possible in the session with a view to the proceedings in Committee of Supply. No such necessity exists in regard to the Consolidated Fund charges which are regulated in amount by the provisions of standing Acts, and the estimate of these charges is accordingly included in the financial statement which is laid as a Parliamentary Paper on Budget day. The details of the Consolidated Fund charges are shown in the Annual Finance Accounts.

County Court Statistics.

MR. OSMOND WILLIAMS (Merionethshire): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that in the County Court Returns for 1905 it appears judgment was recovered by plaintiffs for £2,095,397, and the costs for which judgment was given amounted to £194,155, this last figure being exclusive of court fees which reached the sum of £543,873; and does he propose taking any steps to alter the scale of fees.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The sum of £543,873 shown in the County Courts Return for 1905 comprises a sum of £505,670 in respect of court fees payable to the Exchequer, and a sum of £38,203 payable to registrars for additional duties with regard to equitable actions, actions remitted from the High Court, and numerous other matters. The above sum of £505,670 was payable in respect of 3,041,067 separate proceedings in the courts, or an average of 3s. 4d. for each proceeding. I do not see any adequate reason for altering the scale of fees which at present are not sufficient to meet the total expenditure incurred on the county courts.

Income Tax on Charities.

MR. NEWNES (Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he is aware that charities with incomes of less than £160 per annum are now being charged with the payment of land tax; and whether he can see his way to bring them under the scope of Section 12 of the Finance Act, 1898, which exempts from the payment of land tax any person who has obtained exemption of income tax on the ground that his income is under £160 per annum.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. As there is no exemption from land tax of charities as such, I do not see my way to treat them differently from other bodies, corporate and unincorporate, which are held, as a consequence of the judgment in the case of Curtis *v.* Old Monkland Conservative Association, not to be entitled to exemption from income tax (or, consequentially, from land tax either) on the ground of their total income being less than £160 per annum. I may, however, say that the question of the precise scope and effect of the judgment is receiving consideration, but that, as at present advised, I am not prepared to introduce legislation on this subject.

Limited Liability Companies' Employees and Income Tax.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been directed to the fact that, owing to the treatment of the employees of limited liability companies as public officials under Schedule E of the income tax, they are deprived of the advantage of taxation on the average of three years profit or salary enjoyed by the employees of private firms under Schedule D, and that discrimination is thus made between employees who really belong to the same class; and whether he can see his way either to the abolition of averaging or to the grant of the advantage to employees of companies under Schedule E.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The law is as indicated in the Question. But in practice the Board of Inland Revenue have admitted a modification in favour of the subordinate employees of public companies, as embodied in the following instruction to their surveyors:—"371. Where the Commissioners are willing that clerks, travellers, warehousemen, and other persons employed in a subordinate capacity by limited liability companies should be assessed on an average of three years, no objection should be offered by the surveyor. The rules relating to Schedule E, must, however, be strictly observed in the assessment of directors, secretaries, managers, and other persons holding a distinctive office."

Road Construction in the Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the cause of the delay in proceeding with the construction of the Cromore-Gravir road, Island of Lewis.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The delay has been occasioned by the difficulty of securing a continuous supply of labour and by bad weather. I am informed by telegraph that the contractors have reported to the District Committee that large staffs of workmen will now turn out.

Evictions in the Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of recent evictions of squatters in the Island of Lewis who have built substantial stone houses on the crofters' common grazing ground, in many cases with the consent of the crofters of the townships, he will consider the expediency of introducing a Bill to stay further evictions of squatters and crofter leaseholders, pending the consideration of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

MR. SINCLAIR: My hon. friend is aware that squatting is prohibited by the Crofters Act of 1886 in the interests of the crofters themselves and they possess no power to authorise a breach of this provision. In regard to my hon. friend's suggestion I cannot undertake now to propose any legislation.

MR. WEIR: What about the crofter leaseholders?

MR. SINCLAIR: I grouped them with the squatters in my Answer.

Achintee River—Bridge for Children.

MR WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that children residing in the neighbourhood of Strathcarron railway station, Ross-shire, are unable to cross the Achintee River to reach the Camatt public school except by walking along the railway line and over the railway bridge for a distance of about 400 yards; and, seeing that this practice is extremely dangerous in the case of young children, will he state whether arrangements can be made for the erection of a footbridge over the Achintee River in order that the children may be able to attend school.

MR. SINCLAIR: The matter is one primarily for the county council. As my hon. friend was informed in the official letter addressed to him last month, I shall be prepared to consider favourably an application from the county council for approval of a contribution from their share of the Equivalent Grant to the purpose in question.

Failure of the Scottish Herring Fishery.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the alarm that exists in the North of Scotland owing to the failure in many places of the herring fishing, which is attributed to the indiscriminate slaughter of whales; that on the west coast of Shetland the herring fishing was an entire failure last year, and that it is unlikely there will be any herring stations working there this year; and if he will introduce a measure prohibiting further slaughter until it is established that the great industry of the North will not be endangered.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am aware there has been comparative failure in places, though the herring fishery as a whole in 1906 was very productive. The cause of such local failure as has occurred is difficult to ascertain, but, as has already been announced, it is my intention to bring in a Bill to regulate whaling.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: When will it be brought in?

MR. SINCLAIR: Very shortly.

Scottish Poor Law Medical Officers.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the fixed salary given to a medical officer under the Poor Law in crofting counties is solely for medical attendance on the paupers, or is part of it for that purpose and the rest as payment for any other duties in the parish, apart from any sum which may be paid for vaccinations, visits to pauper lunatics, or lunacy certification?

MR. SINCLAIR: The Answer to the first part of the hon. Member's Question is yes. The salary, in so far as it has to be approved by the Local Government Board for the purposes of the grant, is solely for medical attendance on the paupers.

West United Free Church, Rothesay.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries, Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware of the inconvenience caused to the congregation of the West United Free Church of Rothesay by being compelled still to worship in a wooden building erected on the Esplanade by the favour of the town council; and, considering that it is understood that the congregation is to be reinstated in its church, whether he will make a representation to the Church Commission asking that an allocation order in this case should be issued without further delay.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am aware of the inconvenience referred to by my hon. friend which exists in this and probably in other cases. But I am satisfied that the Royal Commissioners are taking every possible step to accelerate the conclusion of their labours. I do not think my adoption of my hon. friend's suggestion would serve any useful purpose at the present time.

MR. GULLAND: But in view of the prevailing dissatisfaction cannot something be done to accelerate matters?

MR. SINCLAIR: The Commissioners are really doing everything in their power, but if the hon. Gentleman will put down another Question I will endeavour to answer it.

Auld Brig of Ayr.

MR. LIDDELL (Down, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if by patriotic local effort the Auld Brig has been preserved for the nation.

*CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): Before the Question is answered, may I ask whether it is not a fact that Brigg, by a patriotic effort, has been preserved to the Unionist Party?

MR. T. CORBETT (Down, N.): May I ask whether this patriotic effort has not been associated with the improvement in the London County Council?

MR. SINCLAIR: This is not a matter that comes within the scope of my Department.

Morebattle Charities.

SIR. J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that about the year 1745, a certain Mr. More who died at Madras left funds in trust to the heritors of Morebattle parish, in the county of Roxburgh, for the relief of real poor indigent orphans and none else for ever; and whether any and what part of the income of this mortification is now applied to the support of education, and under what authority.

MR. SINCLAIR: Certain funds bequeathed by John More of Fort St. George, Coromandel, to the heritors of the parish of Morebattle, under will dated 17th May, 1753, are now administered in terms of a scheme (No. 144) under the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882, a copy of which scheme may be obtained on application to the School Board of Morebattle who are the governing body under the scheme.

Agricultural Arbitrations in the Highlands.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyll): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, whether he will consider the advisability of issuing regulations showing how far the fact that the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1906, provides that all agricultural arbitrations shall proceed before a single arbitrator affects the duty of the arbitrator to take into consideration all the circumstances which have hitherto governed the valuations of sheep stocks in the Highlands of Scotland.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. SHAW, Hawick Burghs): The Agricultural Holdings Act, 1906, in no way affected the principles of valuations of sheep stocks in the Highlands; and even if it were within my province to issue any regulations on this matter in the sense suggested by my hon. friend, it would be, for the reasons stated, unnecessary to do so.

MR. AINSWORTH: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in applications to the Board under the Agricultural Holdings Acts to appoint an arbitrator in valuations of sheep stocks in the Highlands of Scotland, the Board will keep in view to appoint arbitrators conversant with the practice which has hitherto governed sheep stock valuations in these districts.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir E. Strachey): The Board will certainly keep in view the qualifications of the arbiter with respect to the valuations of sheepstocks in any case where that question is likely to arise.

Cost of Witness Summonses in Ireland.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, whether he is aware that when a defendant in a criminal case requires to summon a witness on his behalf he has to pay the sum of 4s. 7d. for each witness summons; whether the cost of printing these summonses is a mere trifle; and whether he will take into consideration the necessity of reducing this amount.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange): The cost of printing Crown summonses is, as stated in the question, a mere trifle, but a fee of 3s. 1d. is payable to the Clerk of the Crown at assizes for issue of same and a similar fee of 4s. 7½d. to the Clerk of the Peace at quarter sessions. The names of four witnesses can be inserted in each Crown summons, so that the cost for each witness is very small. Poor prisoners are, however, entirely relieved from these fees. When a prisoner signifies, through his solicitor or the governor of the gaol, to the Crown solicitor that he desires to examine witnesses who are, or may seem, material, and he has not himself the means of doing so, it is the duty of the Crown solicitor to take the same steps to procure their attendance as if they were Crown witnesses. The Crown solicitor must, however, be satisfied that the prisoner has not the means to pay before taking this course. Under the circumstance I see no reason for reducing the fees.

Agrarian Dispute at Brackloonbeg.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a man named Thomas Corcoran, having received a farm from the Congested Districts Board, at Brackloonbeg, received also a threatening notice to give up the said farm on 8th January; whether the labourers of the Congested Districts Board were warned to cease work on the farm; and whether they did so.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am informed that the facts are as stated in the Question. The labourers who were warned to cease work did so, but resumed work in the following week; and neither they nor the farmer have since been molested.

Loughrea Outrage.

COLONEL HARRISON-BROADLEY (Yorkshire, E.R., Howdenshire): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Michael Larkin, in Loughrea, the windows of whose house were broken on the night of 24th November last and again on 6th January, 1907; and whether he has any official information showing that Larkin has surrendered a grass farm since this last attack.

MR. BIRRELL: The police authorities inform me that the windows of Larkin's house were broken on the dates mentioned. I have no official information as to Larkin's having surrendered a grass farm, beyond the fact that he has made a statement to that effect to the police.

Agrarian Outrage Compensation Claim at Monaghan.

MR. LIDDELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case tried at Monaghan quarter sessions in January in which £1,151 damages were awarded to a farmer named Joseph Greer, for the malicious burning of his farm buildings and stock, including fourteen horses, three cows, three heifers, and a bull; whether Greer had incurred odium through taking the grazing of a farm from which the former tenant had been evicted; whether he had been subjected to much annoyance in consequence; whether he is aware that the Judge at the trial appealed to decent respectable people who knew about these outrages to come forward and give evidence against the incendiaries; and whether the police have received any information or discovered any evidence which would justify a criminal prosecution.

MR. BIRRELL: The Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary informs me that the facts are substantially as stated in the Question. The police have not succeeded in obtaining sufficient evidence to justify criminal proceedings. Appeals against the County Court Judge's decision have been lodged by the county and rural district councils, and will be shortly heard.

MR. HAYDEN: Is there in England a law similar to that in Ireland enabling these compensation claims to be made?

MR. BIRRELL: I will inquire.

Irish Education (Afflicted Children) Bill.

MR. GIBBS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is the intention of the Government to reintroduce the Irish Education (Afflicted Children) Bill.

MR. BIRRELL: The question of reintroducing this Bill is at present under consideration.

Government Irish University Proposals.

MR. MOORE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if, since Mr. Bryce's statement that the university proposals he then made on behalf of the Government would meet the wishes of the Roman Catholic bishops, he has received any communications from the bishops, oral or otherwise, confirming this statement; and if the Roman Catholic bishops approve of these proposals.

MR. BIRRELL: I beg to refer the hon. Member to the last paragraph of the statement of the Catholic Hierarchy contained in the Appendix to the First Report of the University of Dublin Commission at page 82, and to the letter from the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin to Sir Antony MacDonnell contained in the Appendix to the Final Report at page 422. I have no intimation of any change of opinion.

Irish Judiciary.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of his intended legislation to abolish two out of the next three vacancies occurring in the judiciary of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, any arrangement or understanding exists for the filling up of the first of such vacancies; and whether, in the event of such vacancy occurring prior to the introduction of any such legislation, he will postpone any appointment to it until after the House of Commons has had the opportunity of considering and discussing his proposals.

MR. BIRRELL: I propose to introduce a Bill on this subject to-morrow. The Bill will provide for the abolition, from the 1st instant, of the next two judgeships of the King's Bench Division which shall fall vacant.

Kingston Estate, Mitchelstown.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners received, in December last, a memorial signed by nearly 200 tenants on the No. 3 division of the Kingston estate, Mitchelstown, requesting the Commissioners to cancel their purchase agreements, in consequence of the failure of Mr. Henry Frend, estate agent, to carry out an undertaking given to the tenants at a meeting held in April, 1904, to reserve two acres of Bayly's farm to provide the tenants with sand for building and other purposes free of charge or at a nominal price; and whether, having regard to this allegation of breach of faith, the Commissioners will order a full inquiry to be made into all the circumstances.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received a letter from certain of the tenants in question on the subject of the terms upon which they signed agreements to purchase. The Commissioners have referred the matter to their inspector who will inquire into it when inspecting the estate in its proper order of priority.

Labourers Cottages in County Tyrone.

MR. MOORE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the amount of the Exchequer Grant made to the County Tyrone in respect of labourers cottages in the year ending in 1906, and what is the amount which will be available in the year 1907–8 from the same source by reason of the passing of the Labourers Act of 1906.

MR. BIRRELL: The amount of the Exchequer Grant made to the County Tyrone in the year ending in 1906 was £1,926. The amount which will be available in the year 1907–8 will be approximately £416.

Labourers Cottages in County Antrim.

MR. MOORE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that prior to the passing of The Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906, the County of Antrim received an annual Grant from the Exchequer for the purposes of the Labourers Acts of £2,400; and, seeing that by reason of the Act the annual Grant has been reduced to £392 per annum, will he state what steps he proposes to take.

MR. BIRRELL: The facts are as stated in the Question. I do not propose to take any steps in the matter. The alteration in the law was expressly made with the object of providing for an equitable distribution of the Grant. Under the former system County Antrim received over £2,400 per annum, although it had provided only 212 cottages since 1891; while County Cork, for example, received but £3,400 annually, though it had provided 2,030 cottages during the same period. Under the new system the Grant is apportioned according to the number of cottages in each district. I may observe that the Bill introduced by the late Government in 1904 contained a clause to the same effect as that which has now become law.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, but the clause was withdrawn under pressure.

Lauragh Teacher's Residence.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a site for a new teacher's residence at Lauragh, Kenmare, was procured more than two years ago; that all the necessary preliminary steps were taken, but that no residence has as yet been erected; can he explain the cause of the delay; and can he state when the building will be proceeded with.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I am informed that the delay in this case is entirely due to local causes; the form for application for the loan was sent to the manager on 20th March, 1905, but application was not made till 7th February, 1907.

Irish Board of Works.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention has been called to the attitude of the Secretary of the Board of Works, Dublin, towards the Catholic officials in that Department; and, if so, whether he will take steps to see that the Commissioners of Public Works look after the appointment and promotion of the staff in future, and not leave it in the hands of the Secretary.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I am at a loss to understand the reference in this Question. All appointments in the Board of Works, except those of technical officers, are made as the result of examination by the Civil Service Commissioners, and promotions of the staff are invariably dealt with by the Board itself in communication with the Treasury. Questions relating to discipline are always reported by the Secretary to the Board, who deal with them direct. As I have already stated, the Board have no knowledge of the religious beliefs of their staff.

Public Works Loans in Ireland.

Mr. HAYDEN: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to introduce the Bill amending the provisions of the Public Works Loans Act in regard to loans to local authorities, as promised by him during the debate on the Report stage of the Labourers (Ireland) Act on the 23rd July 1906.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: The matter will be dealt with in the annual Public Works Loans Bill, which, in accordance with custom, will be introduced later in the session.

Government Contracts—"Fair Wages" Clause.

Mr. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the complaints from both employers and workmen regarding the working of the fair wages clause in Government contracts, he would consider the employment of a Committee to discuss and advise how the purpose of the clause can now be better carried out.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I beg also to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the fact that there is considerable diversity in the administration and interpretation of the Fair Wages Resolution by the various Government Departments concerned; and whether he will appoint a Committee to inquire into the question, and to place the working of the fair wage clause in Government contracts on a more satisfactory basis.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs): I have carefully considered this question in consultation with the heads of the Departments concerned. I have come to the conclusion that, in view of various difficulties which have from time to time arisen in the interpretation and working of the Fair Wages Resolution of 1891 as embodied in Government contracts, the question how the purpose of the Resolution can be more effectively attained should form the subject of inquiry. I propose, therefore, to appoint a Departmental Committee to which the question will be referred.

Lords and Commons.

Mr. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Prime Minister when he will be in a position to inform the House what steps are contemplated by the Government to readjust the relations between the two Houses of Parliament.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: At present the time of the House is fully occupied with the financial business of the year; and until that is disposed of it is impossible to name a time for making any announcement on this subject.

Transvaal and the Colonial Conference.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will consider the question of inviting the Government now being formed in the Transvaal to send a representative to the approaching Colonial Conference.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Everyone will appreciate the difficulties in the way of a visit to this country by the Prime Minister of the Transvaal at this juncture when his responsibilites are so great, but a cordial invitation to take part in the Conference has been sent to him.

London County Council Elections.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I desire to ask the President of the Local Government Board a Question of which I have given him private notice. In view of the result of the recent London County Council election and the repudiation by the electors of the policy of the late Council, will he reconsider the attitude of the Government towards the Council's Parliamentary Bills now before the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is not an urgent Question, and does not come within the rule of urgency.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Sir Berkeley George Digby Sheffield, baronet, for the County of Lincoln, North Lindsey or Brigg Division.

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Mr. STUART WORTLEY reported from the Chairman's Panel; That they had appointed Mr. Stuart Wortley to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee for the consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure; and Mr. Eugene Wason to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee for the consideration of Bills relating to Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY further reported from the Chairman's Panel; That they had agreed to the following resolution, That any Member of the Chairman's Panel be and he is thereby empowered to ask any other Member of the Chairman's Panel to take his place in case of necessity.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, in respect of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill: Mr. Tomkinson, Mr. Barker, and Mr. Laurence Hardy; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Cathcart Wason, Mr. Smeaton, and Mr. Carlile.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

CHARACTER NOTE BILL.

"To make it compulsory upon employers to supply a Reference Note to a person leaving their employment and desiring one," presented by Mr. Bell; supported by Mr. Thomas Frederick Richards, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Raphael, and Mr. G. J. Wardle; to be read a second time upon Friday, 5th April, and to be printed. [Bill 87.]

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' OFFICERS BILL.

"To enable Local Authorities to adopt the provisions of The Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act, 1896, and to give Officers of such Authorities a right to appeal," presented by Mr. Luke White; supported by Mr. Barnard, Captain Balfour, Sir Joseph Leese, Mr. Napier, and Mr. Henry Forster; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 88.]

RAILWAY TICKETS BILL.

"To prevent a Time Limit being set upon the use of Passenger Tickets," presented by Mr. Morton; supported by Mr. Rowlands, Mr. Ernest Lamb, Mr. Weir; Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Sir Howard Vincent; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 89.]

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.

"To amend the Acts relating to Public Libraries," presented by Mr. Tennant; supported by Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Mackarness, Mr. Morrell, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Middlemore, Sir William Holland, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Sir Charles Schwann, and Mr. Harmood-Banner; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 90.]

LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS BILL.

"To establish Limited Partnerships," presented by Sir William Holland; supported by Mr. Cave, Mr. Holden, Mr. Isaacs, and Mr. Shackleton; to be read a second time upon Friday, 15th March, and to be printed. [Bill 91.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY, AND TERRITORIAL AND RESERVE FORCES BILL).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the proceedings in Committee or on Report of Supply, or upon the introduction of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, if under consideration at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 248; Noes, 83. (Division List No. 34.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, John Emmott (Somers't
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
ace, William
Branch, James
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt. Hn Sir J T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Chas.
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clarke, C. Goddard
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Coats, Sir T. Glen (Renfrew, W.)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Frank (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert Jn.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Hart-Davies, T.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Colonel Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey

Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster)
Lambert, George
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Chas. (Donegal, E.)
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Chas. N. (Doncast'r)
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Perks, Robert William
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, Robert Jn. (Norfolk, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Major J. B.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Wadsworth, J.
Waldron, Laurence Ambrose
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds, S.)
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, RtHn AJ (CityLond.)
Baring, Hon. Guy (Winchester
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildret
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. A. (Wor.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Chas. Curtis (Antrim, S.)
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gordon, Sir W. Evans (T'r Ham.
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'd
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hervey, F. W. F. (Bury S Edm'ds.
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hn. Col. W.
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Liddell, Henry
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James L. (Windsor)
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)

Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk)
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Forster.

TERRITORIAL AND RESERVE FORCES BILL.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Last week we had a debate in this House on certain plans outlined on behalf of the Government for the reorganisation of the King's forces. To-day it is my duty to propose to the House a Bill to create the machinery for giving effect to those plans, and I do not think that the work of explanation will take me any great time.

The Bill consists of thirty-eight clauses, and it aims at creating machinery for fulfilling four purposes. The first of these is to constitute military committees of county Associations, whose main function will be the organisation and administration within their counties of the Territorial or Home Forces raised under the Bill. The second purpose will be to obtain the authority of Parliament to the constitution of what is really the new force, in which others are merged, called the Territorial or Home Force, which will gradually absorb and replace the existing Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers. The third purpose is the adaptation of the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act as to training and periods of service to the requirements of the special contingent—that is, the men who undertake to serve when wanted with the Regulars, but who are for the most of their time in civilian occupations. Then there is a fourth purpose. Under our organisation there is the Army which keeps the home or feeding battalions on a peace establishment in time of peace, and into that are poured on mobilisation the Regular Reserves. In order to bring these home battalions to war strength it is necessary to have a general mobilisation in order to call out these Reserves. It has, therefore, always been necessary to keep a small force which can be mobilised immediately without a general mobilisation, which has been called the striking force. I agree with my hon. friend the Member for Salford that that is not a very happy term; it is rather in the nature of a police force of the Empire which we can send on short notice, and its essential qualification is that it should be perfectly equipped and should be small. That force has been for some time in a very unsatisfactory condition. The machinery by which it is put into operation is called the A Reserve, which consists of a certain number of the Reserve who come out without waiting for the general mobilisation because they are under special engagement to do so. We propose slightly to enlarge the ambit of the Reserve from which these men can be got—we are short of them at the present time—and also to make use of the new Special Contingent to get certain men for that purpose. We do not propose to raise the number at present. All we wish to do is to have the power, within certain limits, the definition of which I will give. The reason is this. The General Staff is at present working out the constitution of that force, and until they say what it should be, and how large it should be, it is impossible for us to say how many men we need for it. The number will not be large in any event, not larger, I think, really than Parliament has authorised at the present time. But owing to certain conditions contained in the statute we cannot get our full number at present. Therefore, for the improvement of this urgency force there are certain changes which we propose in our legislative machinery, and to effect these is the fourth purpose of the Bill.

I will tell the House how the Bill has been worked out. In the first place, having the general conception, the plan, I consulted a body of which a good deal was heard at the time, the Committee presided over by Lord Esher, which consisted of a certain number of very distinguished commanding officers, representatives of county councils—people familiar with municipal life—and representatives of the Auxiliary Forces. That body sat last year and devoted a great deal of work to reviewing the ground and getting materials together. It gave me these materials in an informal shape; no Report was ever laid on the Table of the House—indeed it was never intended that the Committee should ever give anything more than what I may call personal advice, to enable my advisers and myself to consider how the Bill should be shaped. The work done, however, was very valuable, the ground was thoroughly explored and mapped out, and results given us which we set to work to consider. We found that in some points what the Committee suggested was not quite adapted to the ideas of the Auxiliary Forces, and particularly of the Volunteer force. Therefore we went into the matter with this very valuable material, and by making certain slight modifications we have brought the plan, I think, into a shape which will make it more agreeable to the commanding officers of the Auxiliary Forces than it otherwise might have been. Put broadly, the difference between the scheme of Lord Esher's Committee and the scheme of the Bill is this: The Committee recommended the establishment of county associations composed of *ex officio*, elected, and co-opted members, and that those associations should practically be entrusted with the entire administration and financial control of the territorial forces within their area. Our plan in the Bill provides for the establishment of county associations, but leaves in the hands of the Army Council large discretionary powers as to the composition of the association, while providing for the adequate representation upon it of the officers of the territorial forces. On the other hand, the Bill does not do what was suggested by the Esher Committee, it does not confer any powers directly upon the associations; but it provides machinery for assigning and transferring powers and duties to them, either at once or by degrees, and not necessarily all at the same time, and always subject to revocation if necessary. In short, the military committees of the county associations will be, as it were, incorporated administrative officers, acting under the directions of the Army Council, which will create them by schemes suited to the exigencies of varying localities. We have carefully provided that the associations shall have nothing to do with the command and training of the troops, but shall be confined to admintisrative functions.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): What about the borough councils?

* MR. HALDANE: I will explain that. We have taken the militia counties as the basis. That is done in the Militia Acts, and it is much the most convenient area. The great boroughs come into the counties. The Bill divides itself into these four parts, and, of course, in framing the thirty-eight clauses of which it is composed, I had to keep the various and possibly conflicting interests in view. Although the clauses are numerous the principles are, I think, pretty clear. What had to be kept in view was, above all, the social conditions of the various Auxiliary Forces and the officers and men who compose them. We had to study and make use of the existing regulations; it was convenient to use those whenever we could, because people were familiar with them. The result has been that we have incorporated these as far as possible in the existing Bill. I set to work in the first instance myself on this Bill, with draughtsmen of great experience to assist me; and, having got the Bill into shape, it was then submitted to a variety of experts. It was considered in the War Office; it then passed into the hands of the Parliamentary counsel, who not only succeeded in reducing it in dimensions, but I think added greatly to the clearness of the arrangement. We might have framed a Bill very shortly, legislating by reference; but I am sure that I have best consulted the convenience of hon. Members by trying, even at the risk of producing a longer Bill, to make it an honest Bill, setting out the whole story. Really I think it will serve as a sort of handbook to the scheme. There are many references in it to sections in in various Acts with which we are familiar, but all the main principles, and all that I think hon. Members need to know, they will find set out *in extenso*. We have preferred that plan to the plan of producing a short Bill, which would have been extremely unintelligible. In framing the plan of the Bill we had to avoid Scylla on the one hand and Charybdis on the other. Scylla is the tempting plan of trying to leave people to their free devices as much as possible. We realised that the state of things in the Auxiliary Forces was such that no one who had the military interests of the country at heart could be really content with it, and we saw that a great transition into another state of things would be necessary if the Auxiliary Forces were to be put upon a satisfactory footing. Therefore we avoided anything like slackness in the formation of our plan. But, on the

other hand, we endeavoured, while framing a real military organisation, to avoid doing what would press heavily upon the energies and the hopes of the various component elements in the Auxiliary Forces themselves. For example, we felt it better, even at the risk of its taking a year or two longer, to get this thing done, to make full provision for a transition period. We thought it better so to frame our scheme that it need not and would not come into operation all at once, or even in every part of the country at the same time, and that it should be possible for units to pass from the one side of the line to the other without feeling the change in any material degree. Nobody is compelled, they are invited under this scheme. By degrees, and in different parts of the country, should our machinery work as we hope it will, a transformation will be effected gradually. We think it will probably begin slowly, but that it will increase in rapidity as the matter progresses.

Then there was another thing we had to bear in mind in our desire for the policy thorough in this matter, tempered only in the way I have indicated. We are very keenly conscious that the unsatisfactory state of the forces of the Crown is producing a certain amount of unrest in the public mind; and if that unrest is not allayed the result will be an agitation for what may be unpopular at this moment, but what might become popular under changed circumstances, and what the Government would regard as very disastrous—an organised movement for compulsion. We want all to set our minds against compulsion. Therefore, we came to the conclusion that our plan of reorganisation should be as thorough as possible, for the policy thorough, we think, will tend to secure us against such a movement. It may take time, it may require the co-operation of successive political parties; but we think that if we should succeed in organising a really strong second line we should be throwing up the stoutest intrenchments against attacks in the interest of compulsion, however they might be devised. The Army we propose for the second line is not an Army that is to be used on ordinary occasions. It is to be called on only in a time of great emergency. Essentially a Home Defence Force, it will be so organised that, should a time of stress come and the Empire be in danger, and the spirit of the people aroused to meet the emergency, it may be capable of great expansion. Its primary purpose, as I have said, is to defend our shores; but we feel that the organisation is of a type that, should it be copied by the great Colonies, we should have what would be for them as well as for us a second line Army that should put this Empire in a state of such security that no one would rashly dare to meddle with us. The organisation which we have framed is one from which we should reluctantly make departures in any material sense. It is a chain, its strength measured by its weakest link; if you break that weakest link the chain goes. We think we have hit upon as good a plan as it is possible to work out. In its preparation we have had the assistance of the keenest military brains, and we are satisfied that it will best satisfy our demands. Sacrifice it involves, but it does not involve sacrifice for the Auxiliary Forces alone. The Regulars have had battalions reduced; their officers have been delayed in promotion; and it is only just that in an attempt at reorganisation, giving everything its due proportion, the Auxiliary Forces should bear their share of the burden also. We trust that as the result the men of the Regular and Auxiliary Forces will come more closely together. Under the old state of things there has been in the relations of the two forces an attitude of aloofness. We hope that under our plan the Regular and the second line will feel that both are parts of a great whole working together for a common end.

With these preliminary remarks I come to the Bill. There are four clauses dealing with the County Association. The association is essentially a business body. It is in its nature a military administrative committee incorporated by and acting under the direction of the Army Council. It will have—apart from its president, the Lord-Lieutenant—a chairman of committee; and that chairman, we hope, will be the most capable man in the association. It will also have a secretary, a man, we hope, of thorough competence and interested in the work. The area will be the county. The organisation will consult with the General Staff, whose duty it will be to consider how best each county can contribute its quota to the division, representing the grouped regimental district in which the county is situated. There will usually be four or five counties in each grouped regimental district, and each grouped regimental district is to furnish a division. We know that each regimental district contains, roughly, the material for a division; and each county will have assigned to it the raising of what best it can supply to the division. The right hon. Gentlemen opposite made the point that a county might be called upon to do that which it could not do conveniently. That is not our intention. The plan is that the county should be called upon to do that which it can do best. Not every county can do the same thing; some can give one thing, and some another; and what will happen is that after a survey of the capabilities of the various counties in a regimental district the General Staff will make its requisition. Consequently, we hope the strain on the counties will not be great. Having furnished its quota to the division, the next business of the association is to provide for the business interest and the administration of the affairs of the force which it has thus raised. We think it is a very bad system under which at present in the Auxiliary Forces command and training are not separated from administration. It is, particularly, very hard on the Volunteer commanders that they should not have any supply organisations. But in future the association will look after all business matters. It will send up an estimate of its requirements to the War Office every year. After the estimate has been reviewed by the commander of the division and the subordinate commanders under him, the War Office will pronounce upon it; and if the Army Council approve, the association will be furnished with the funds necessary for fulfilling the heads under which the requisition for supplies have been made. The accounts will be carefully audited, not by the War Office, for we desire to avoid centralisation as much as possible, but locally in somewhat the same way as the accounts of municipal bodies are audited by the Local Government Board. The association will be incorporated with power to hold property. It will contain, as at least half of its numbers, the officers representing the various branches of the territorial force raised in the county. It will have representatives, appointed by the Army Council, after consultation, where it appears to be desirable, with the parties concerned, of the county councils, the borough councils, and the universities, wholly or partly within the county. The association will have a certain power of co-option, which we think is valuable, for this reason, that one of the difficult things which the association will have to work out is to suit the representatives of the various classes, the employers, the farmers, the agricultural labourers; and it is desirable, therefore, that it should be able to co-opt representatives of both labour and capital, so that it may be in the position of obtaining the most competent advice in the discharge of its functions.

I now come to the president of the association. Hitherto Lords-Lieutenant have been in a somewhat decadent position. They are not so important as they once were, which we think is a great deal due to the fact that they have fallen away from their proper function, that of representing the Crown in local military matters. Of one thing we are clear, that the Deputy Lords-Lieutenant of the future ought to be people who have rendered distinguished service in this work. What happens now is that the Lord-Lieutenant sends up to the Secretary of State for War the list of names which he recommends for appointment as Deputy-Lieutenants, and the Secretary of State for War simply intimates that he has no objection. But in future only those will be approved of who have done good work in the organisation of the local forces of the county; and, though this is a matter which concerns the Prime Minister, we trust that the same beneficial spirit will prevail in the appointment of Lords-Lieutenant also. It will be their duty to preside at the meetings of the association, and as the link with the landowners to help the association to obtain the necessary grounds for rifle ranges and manœuvres, facilities which I am sure will be thus obtained much easier than before. Among the other duties of the association will be that of looking after the rifle clubs and the cadet corps within the county, to provide horses, arms, and equipments, and to supply all the requirements needed by its force on mobilisation; to pay allowances to the families of the men when called out on actual military service, and various other duties, such as the registration of horses in the county for the Regulars, and the obtaining of employment for soldiers after service with the colours. I mention these functions merely by way of illustration. The Army Council, as the chief authority, will determine what the association is to do and not to do. But there is one express limitation to the duties of the association. It is to have nothing to do with command or training. As to the rest of the matter, the Army Council will make regulations for governing the powers of these bodies, and will superintend them; but our wish is that the Army Council should not interfere with details. Decentralisation is better; and, if you get competent men, they work better when you give them their heads. We hope to have a proper body at the War Office to represent these associations and advise as to their functions, and through the Civil Member of the Army Council we shall make their voice heard on the Army Council. They will not be under the Chief of the General Staff or the Adjutant General, but under the Civil Member, who has not so many functions and who will have this largely as his chief business in the future.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): Will he be a General, or what?

*MR. HALDANE: No, the Civil Member is, as a rule, a Peer in the House of Lords. He may be in this House or he may be anybody; but a General he never is.

COLONEL R. WILLIAMS (Dorsetshire, W.): Are these bodies to be very large bodies?

*MR. HALDANE: Oh, no, just large enough to contain the elements of which I spoke. I should think they would consist of about twenty members—probably less in the smaller counties.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): Is there to be one body for the whole of the work in Lancashire?

*MR. HALDANE: No, we have taken power to make sub-associations, and Lancashire, which is a very large county, might very well have three sub-associations under the head association.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): Will the associations have anything to do with contracts for forage and rations?

*MR. HALDANE: Yes, except when the forces are in camp. Then they are maintained in the same way as other forces; but in ordinary times, for the purposes of training, the supplies of forage, etc., will be obtained from these associations.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): How many sub-associations will there be for the county of York?

*MR. HALDANE: The Ridings are separate counties, and there will therefore be three separate associations.

Now I come to the second part of this Bill—that which deals with the raising and maintenance of the home defence force. In the case of the Volunteers the number has never been under the regulation of Parliament. The number of the Regular standing Army is defined by Parliament; but that has never been done in the case of the Volunteers, and the reason is that the Volunteers can go out at a fortnight's notice. It was, no doubt, thought that the Volunteer was not, properly speaking, a soldier, and that it was not necessary to put a check upon his numbers. But we think that we ought to follow the analogy of the Militia. Parliament has not specified the numbers of the Yeomanry. I have never understood the Yeomanry Act—one of the most obscure examples of legal drafting that exists. But in the case of the Militia, Parliament has hitherto defined the number, not in the Army Act, but in the Appropriation Act of the year. We propose that the numbers should be specified by Parliament. I think it is better to treat this territorial force in all respects as one on which Parliament can keep its hand. Therefore, there will be a maximum, and I have indicated it at somewhere about 300,000. We do not fix it in the Bill, but it will be so in future. There will be, of course, new military regulations for this force, and we shall get rid of the three different kinds of regulations which the Auxiliary Forces possess at the present time. As regards enlistment, on this question there has been more criticism than on any other. What is the position of the Volunteer at the present moment? Nominally he enrols under an Act of

Parliament which leaves him free in time of peace at fourteen days notice. But if war breaks out there is no term to his service, and he is in a worse position than the Regular soldier. At present there is a substantial check on the Volunteer's leaving. He is bound by rules which provide that he shall remain for four years and shall not go out without paying a substantial fine. It is largest at the beginning, and varies with the length of the Volunteer's service; and the commanding officer has power to remit it, and does, wherever there would be hardship. We endeavour to do the same thing. What we have provided is that a man shall come in for four years, and that his engagement may be renewed afterwards. If he wishes to go out, he must give three months notice and pay such sum as is prescribed by regulation, not to exceed £5. We contemplate some sort of sliding scale such as the Volunteer corps have. It is right that there should be some check. A considerable amount of public money has been spent on the training of men, and their equipment has undergone wear and tear; and if the Volunteer were allowed to go out arbitrarily without notice, it would be very wrong. On the other hand, the Volunteer may be a workman who wants to go to another part of the country, or he may wish to be transferred to another corps, or he may be ill. To meet these cases we have had this clause inserted—

> "Provided that it shall be lawful for the association of the county or any officer whom it may appoint, in any case in which it appears that the reason for the discharge is of sufficient urgency, to dispense wholly or in part with both or either of the above conditions as to notice and payment."

Therefore, the Volunteers will be in practically the same position as at present; but just as the rules are an effective check on men going out arbitrarily, so we hope this provision will be. We had the power of defining the terms, if we wished; but we thought it better that they should take this elastic shape, and that the working out should be left to experience, rather than that a sliding scale should be drawn up in the Bill.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Will the military power or the county association have the decision on this point?

*MR. HALDANE: I hope the association will have a sub-committee constantly sitting to deal with these matters. We provide that the association may delegate the power to any officer; and in most cases it will do so to the commanding officer; and, of course, the Army Council by regulations will say who is to exercise this power on behalf of the association. It must be someone always on the spot.

The next thing is the area of service. Instead of England and Scotland, we have taken the United Kingdom. That is the Militia area, and we think it the right area. The force is essentially a Home Defence Force; and, while we have avoided in the Bill anything like a statutory encouragement to invitations to serve abroad, we have left it open for individuals or units to volunteer in a case of great national emergency. They can go abroad if they wish; but the scheme and provision is for a force for home defence; and it is upon that basis that the Bill is framed.

Then as to preliminary training. I notice that the hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield is just leaving the House. I may state that I am about to deal with the point which he requested me to answer. He seems to be very much concerned about the adjutants. According to the notions of the day, we hold that the functions of command and training should be distinct from the function of administration. If you pile them all on to one man none is well done. This is shown by experience; and foreign armies have found the principle of separation very advantageous. It is our principle in the Regular Army, and we propose to extend it to the Auxiliary Troops. What is the consequence? At present the adjutant, who is a very efficient person in many cases, is a sort of handy man to the unit. He looks after every sort of thing for the commanding officer, both interior economy and the training of the men, and I do not think that that has been altogether good for the commanding officer in many cases. I am speaking of moral and military benefits, rather than of material. We propose very much to improve the training of this force as contrasted with the old training. We propose to have these training battalions belonging to the Regular side for the training of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the territorial units in their neighbourhood. We propose that there should be organised, under the eyes of the General Staff, regular courses of instruction in the county. These courses will be given by instructors of high quality. They will be the persons who do the training under the eye of the General Staff, and to some extent the instructors will be available for consultation and assistance locally, wherever the commanders of units require their services. They would be detached from the new training brigades of artillery and the training battalions for this purpose. The function of the adjutant, therefore, will not be, as at present, in running about from place to place, and the drilling of the men will be better done than otherwise. He will have left to him the work of organising the interior economy of the unit. That can be as well done by an able young Volunteer adjutant. I see an hon. Member shake his head. I am sure it can. I should like to choose some young solicitor, with not too much to do, to attend to this thing; and I am sure that on the business side of the work you will get more by such an arrangement than from an officer who has more than one function to discharge. But there is nothing in this Bill to prejudge the question. I am speaking of what the General Staff have been thinking of a great deal lately; but experience must tell whether the experiment will succeed or not. We are not going to cut off the skilled assistance that this force had, but rather substantially to increase it; and the shape it takes must be determined by experience. It may be that we shall ultimately come to the conclusion that the functions now performed by the adjutant ought to be separated under the heads of training and administration. Under the commanding officer, the adjutant who would belong to the unit would deal with administrative matters and with interior economy both in peace and in war. Training would be mainly in the hands of squadron, battery, and company commanders, who would be assisted, as required, by a Regular instructional staff.

I come now to the point of annual training. As I have said, the idea is that the men in these units should get their preliminary training, and indeed, what one may call their non-camp training, as much as possible on the spot from local instructors, arrangements being made to suit their convenience. But the annual training, which is absolutely vital, is another matter, and is very important. It is provided that the period shall be, under Clause 14 of the Bill, not less than eight, nor more than fifteen, days. That is to be the annual training A man who enlists in the force will have to undergo that annual training and attend a certain number of drills and fulfil other conditions relating to preliminary training which may be prescribed, subject to a power of dispensation which the prescribed general officer may exercise. We leave large latitude to the commanding officer, and the reason is this—we want to make it as easy as possible for men to take their annual training, provided only they take it efficiently, in the form which suits them best. They cannot take it efficiently unless they go into camp, and we have provided for camps; and I hope as many men as possible will go for fifteen days, and when we think they cannot do that, I trust we may ask them to take not less than eight days. We reserve a dispensing power even there; but our purpose is not to be slack in this matter, but to get as much as we can. For that purpose we shall have to deal not only with representatives of capital, but also with representatives of labour.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): Does the right hon. Gentleman mean fifteen days this year?

*MR. HALDANE: We shall have no associations organised for this year. This Bill cannot possibly come into operation till next year.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): Who is the authority to say whether the period shall be eight days or fifteen days?

*MR. HALDANE: The Commander-in-Chief, working with the General Staff. I think one of the most difficult questions we have to deal with is how to get the time arranged in such a way as to suit the men and suit the employers. I am not at all hopeless of this Some of the energetic commanding officers in the Liverpool district have had this matter under consideration, and the response from the employers has been remarkable. Thirty-five great shipping firms in Liverpool have agreed to give, not only a preference to the men who wish to serve in the camps as to taking holiday at that time, but they have even gone further and agreed to give them an extra week. That is very fine, and all we could wish. The movement is spreading further. Nineteen shipping firms in London have done the same thing. I am taking one great interest only as an illustration of the possibilities in this matter. I have been in communication with employers of labour and commanding officers for some time past. In the great towns of the north of England particularly there has been a very remarkable response to this idea. They have felt that after all this force is something which exists, not for show or amusement, but to give them a sense of security; they are ready to make, many of them, their contributions towards it. We believe public spirit will grow in this matter; and we hope a response will come, not only from the employers, but also from the men themselves, and that they will be willing and anxious, if it is made easy to them, to take a good, long camp in the autumn—fifteen days, as I have suggested. In a mild way, the House will appreciate that we have made camp compulsory. That seems a drastic thing to do, but it is absolutely essential. I do not mean that anybody would be put in prison for not going to camp, but he must go into camp if he is able to do so. This force can be of benefit to the nation only if it is well trained, and without going into camp and training by combined arms, possibly along with the Regulars, you cannot get the training we want. What we lay stress on is not this short training, preliminary training and training in camp, but something else. We have taken the best advice we can get. The great commanding generals of this country have said to us, We know what European troops are, we know what modern nations have laid down as the standard of efficiency in their Army; if you are to make this second line efficient, it must do something more; it must mobilise and go in for a further period of training. I have said this force exists only for a great emergency. If the great general mobilisation came, then we provide that, automatically and subject to certain safeguards, the force should be embodied—embodied not quite immediately, and trained further. The difference between us and those who put forward earlier schemes is this. We have thrown the war training on to the other side of the mobilisation, being enabled to do so as an island Power, instead of making it take place in time of peace. You could never get a large Volunteer force to take six months training in time of peace. But when the nation is really in jeopardy, and, as a great employer said to me, our very works are disorganised by the convulsion which the outbreak of war produces, such training may be not only possible but even convenient. A certain amount of employment ceases, and it is well there should be a large number of men under embodiment preparing themselves for the defence of these shores. Therefore, what we have provided is this. On the issue of a proclamation ordering the Army Reserve generally to be called out, it should be lawful for the King to order the Army Council to give such directions as may seem necessary or proper for embodying the whole or any part of the territorial force. The Army Council, within a month after such directions have been given, are to issue directions for embodiment, unless an Address has been presented by the two Houses of Parliament to the Throne asking that the directions should be cancelled. There is another safeguard. The embodiment cannot take place without a vote of money. If you embody the territorial force Parliament would have to vote a large sum of money. That, of course, can only be done by this House, and, therefore, this House has complete control over the question whether the second line should be called out or not. But we have thought it well for the purpose, not only of symmetry, but also of giving reality to it, to make this the rule, that unless Parliament interferes the general mobilisation which will only take place on a great occasion is automatically to put the second line in war training. That is the scheme. I hope it may not be brought to the test. If it is, this seems to me the best machinery for securing what we desire. The period of six months has figured very largely in these discussions, but it is not mentioned in the Bill. What the war training will be will depend on the regulations and directions which are given. We are advised by the great military authorities whom we have consulted that six months with a highly intelligent force like this would be enough to put it into good military condition. A good many men may be ready before the term of six months, and others may want more time. The Bill says nothing about the period. It only says that there is to be embodiment for proper war training.

That brings me to the point raised by my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean. He asked justly what provision is made for the transition from the old system to the new. We have made this provision. The coast defence troops are outside the fourteen divisions. There are 12,000 of these troops. They are organised and they will continue organised; gradually they will be brought under the new system, but they will remain as at present under the coast defence commanders. There are other corps which will only very gradually pass under the new *régime.* We have drawn a very great distinction between what happens when war has broken out and the troops are mobilised and what happens in time of peace. In time of war men must be under military discipline—that is absolutely essential—but in time of peace we have cut out everything like courts-martial and military rule. If a man breaks regulations and does not come up when he ought to do so the worst that can happen to him is the imposition of a small fine, enough to be a caution, but not too much so as to hurt him, and there is a power of excuse in a proper case. We hope that will be sufficient, as it has proved tc be in the case of the Volunteers, to bring a man up for the purpose of taking his training. The fine will be recovered under summary jurisdiction, and it will be, even in the worst case, nothing that is unduly severe; but it is necessary to have some sanction to make people come up for training. I hope a good deal may be given in future in other forms we cannot enter into now, in the way of providing badges and decorations. What we have provided in the Bill is that as an officer or man of the force is giving his time to the State when he goes out for training, so he shall be dispensed from the obligation to serve on a jury or as parish officer or peace officer. Also we have provided, by way of encouraging yet another source from which we can get an accession of strength that acceptance of a commission as an officer in the Territorial Force will not vacate the seat of any Member returned to serve in Parliament. We have also provided that, notwithstanding military obligations, there is to be leave to go and vote. [AN HON. MEMBER: No exemptions from income-tax?] That must be, I think, for another Parliament. So much for the second part of the Bill.

Now I come to what I shall take quite shortly, the transitionary clauses. Under the transitionary clauses we do this—in order to provide for the time during which the old system has not passed away and the other has not become fully applicable, we have said that the associations need not be constituted all at once. The Army Council may begin with Lancashire, London, or some county in Scotland, just as they think fit, and constitute an association in that county; if you do that, for instance, in Lancashire you would have a whole division for your county and would be able to work out the whole thing within the compass of the county. Then it is provided that no unit is to be transferred except by an Order in Council, and that no officer or man shall be compelled to change his terms of service against his will. Then it is provided that no unit is to be transferred except by an Order in Council, and that no officer or man shall be compelled to change his terms of service against his will. A unit may cease to exist, but he will not be compelled to serve in any other except the one in which he enlisted. Then, as regards property, the association will take over any property held by the corps on trust, subject to the trusts. The trustee will be changed, but that is all. If, however, the corps is willing that the trust should be changed owing to the changed circumstances and the necessities of the Territorial Army then there is power to enable that to be done.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Will property be compulsorily taken over?

*MR. HALDANE: Oh, no. The trust will only be changed if the corps is willing by voluntary agreement. I have recently made the discovery that a rector is not the only person who is a corporation sole. A commanding officer of Volunteers also appears to be so. When the property is taken over, the association becomes *ipso facto* the trustee; but when it comes to a question of a varying of a trust, that variation can only take with the consent of the unit. In order to facilitate the transfer of property, we have presented a Supplementary Estimate, which will follow on the adoption of this Bill and under which we shall provide for the debts of those corps so far as they affect money which has been borrowed through the Public Works Loans Commissioners. We take them over and extinguish them in order to facilitate the arrangements as to the transfer of property.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Does the Supplementary Estimate place the Secretary of State or the Army Council in the position of the Public Works Loans Commissioners as creditors? Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to remit the debts of the local forces?

*MR. HALDANE: That is so. On the hypothesis that the scheme goes through you do remit the debts, and the property will be transferred to the associations. The position at present is this. The corps borrows the money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners and the money to pay for the interest comes from the capitation grant. That is a bad form of finance. If we abolish the capitation grant there will therefore in future be no money out of which to pay the interest. But even if this scheme does not go through it makes no difference to the position of the Public Works Loans Commissioners. They declare trusts in our favour, we having paid the money. There will be an equitable transfer. My right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was good enough to say—

> "You may pay off the Public Works Loans Commissioners and then the debt will be due to you. It will remain a debt, and it will be paid off out of the capitation grants and that would be the security."

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: In whom will the property vest?

*MR. HALDANE: The property remains in the corps until it is taken over by the association.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): Does property such as drill halls subscribed for privately remain in the names of the officers of a corps?

*MR. HALDANE: Oh, yes. In the case of a hall which is built partly out of public money and partly out of subscriptions the mortgagor remains the same. Only the mortgagee is changed, and the mortgagee will now be the War Office. The War Office has no more power than the Public Works Loans Commissioners.

Now I come to a point as to the Reserve. We have to amend slightly the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act 1882, in order to provide for the existence of our special contingent. Our Special Contingent is not a reserve of men who have served with the Colours. They are men who are engaged in various capacities to come in on mobilisation. Therefore you cannot enlist them under the Reserve Forces Act of 1882; so we slightly amend that Act so as to enable a man to be enlisted straight into the Reserve. They come in for different terms into the Reserve without previous service with the Colours. We do not want them to come in under the Colours, but only on mobilisation. These men will be very much the Militiamen of to day. We discussed this rather on the footing, I think, that we were destroying the Militia; but we have not really destroyed them. The same class of men who now come into the Militia will come into the Special Contingent by this new door, and have very much the same sort of training as is given in the Militia.

Now I come to the last point in the Bill, viz., the so-called striking force, or as I would call it, the Imperial police force, a force which can be sent on small expeditions at short notice. Hitherto, in order to deal with the matter and to mobilise a force of this kind we had to resort either to what is called Section A of the Regular Reserve or to Volunteers from the Reserve. That is a very bad system. On the other hand, the A Reserve, which is 5,000 men, has never come out or taken service in proportion to its numbers, which is now 4,300. The reason is that men cannot enlist in the A Reserve unless they do so in the first twelve months. We have, however, extended the period to two years and enlarged the number to 6,000 in order to make sure of getting the requisite numbers. We have also taken power to create a corresponding Reserve within the Special Contingent of 4,000 men. That will enable us to get at short notice and without general mobilisation, Army Medical Corps, Army Service Corps, and other non-combatants, and also to make some provision for wastage in a small force of this kind. We do not propose to put those people who belong to the Special Contingent in the first or combatant line. That we propose to do entirely with the Regular Reserve. They are merely for the wastage of war. The General Staff are working out the best form of striking force, and these clauses, if the House agrees to them, will give us the power to determine what is the best force. It cannot be a large force, but it ought to be large enough to deal with some sudden emergency. We hope to get material assistance from the Irish battalions which represent the old Militia in Ireland, which we have kept alive because there is no territorial force there. They will consist of men who have undertaken to serve abroad if necessary. They cannot be called on until mobilisation, but they may volunteer, and if they do so they will do it without disturbing the mobilisation arrangements of the General Reserve. We think that in this way we can get the small expeditionary force of which I have spoken into a more satisfactory state. So much for the general scheme of the Bill. There is only one thing I have omitted. Although I spoke of camps as in some senses compulsory, we have vested in the Commander-in-Chief a dispensing power with regard to that. Some men cannot come up for eight days, and we make provision to meet that case.

Now as regards the Bill as a whole, it will be seen that the plan and scheme of it is a gradual transition and absorption from one state of things to the other. It may take a very short time or it may take some years. It is best to do things thoroughly, even if doing them thoroughly means the expenditure of a certain amount of time in bringing the change about. In order to secure that the change shall come about we have to appeal not merely to this House, but to the public, to the nation itself. We do appeal to them with some confidence. We do think that the nation is in earnest in this matter. The Government feel that what is desired of them above everything is that, having got a clear line, having shown that they are open to consider detail and to learn as the discussion of this complicated matter proceeds, still they should stick firmly to the general principles they have laid down in this Bill. On that I lay great stress. Sometimes, although a scheme may not be the very best ideal, it is very much better to follow it out rather rigidly than to wobble about in the hope of finding something better. Therefore our proposal is to stick rather strenuously to our first principles in this matter while keeping our mind open on points that do not involve any deviation from it. I read this morning a remarkable article, in which there are some things I do not agree with, in *The Times* newspaper on these matters. But there were some things in it which I agree with very much, and what I am going to read is one of those things. It is an article written by a writer of well-known ability and distinguished literary skill. "The scheme," he says—

> "is to make the best possible use of existing forces and to leave the door invitingly open for future progress. Such modifications in detail as appear desirable can be made without danger to the fundamental principles so clearly laid down. It is most earnestly to be desired that the Secretary of State will hold tenaciously to these principles, and will not surrender an inch to clamour. It is better that he should lose by trusting the people than that he should win by distrusting them."

These words represent my own strong feeling upon this matter; and it is by appealing to the public and to the nation that we hope to secure a change for the better. I beg to move.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the reorganisation of His Majesty's Military Forces, and for that purpose to authorise the establishment of county associations and the raising and maintenance of a Territorial Force, and for amending the Acts relating to the Reserve Forces."—(*Mr. Haldane.*)

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I sympathise with the right hon. Gentleman in one circumstance connected with this debate, and that is that there have not been present a larger number of Members in the House to listen to the very clear and able statement which he has just made to us. We have to thank the right hon. Gentleman for explaining the Bill at some length, its contents being obviously of the utmost importance to the country, and he, I am sure, will not complain if even at this early stage of the proceedings, before we have the Bill in our hands, we make some remarks in the nature of criticism. I need hardly say that that criticism, whether it proves acceptable to the Government or not, proceeds from no lack of desire that there shall be found throughout the country that great national patriotism to which the right hon. Gentleman appeals, and without which no scheme can possibly succeed. While we all join in the desire that to an appeal of this kind there should be a patriotic and self-denying response, it is necessary, in justice to those whose services will be required under the scheme, that the House shall carefully and critically consider the steps they are taking along the path which we are asked for the first time to tread. The scheme is intended to fill up gaps and supplement deficiencies created by decisions previously announced to the House. The ultimate reduction they will cause in the Army is estimated by some experts at nearer 40,000 than the 13,000 officially suggested. I gather from the right hon. Gentleman that there is no proposal to deal with the permanent staff other than adjutants. Although I do not wish to take any pessimistic view, I do regard the formation of the special contingent with great anxiety. On the information before the House, I cannot believe that the kind of training these men are going to receive will make them really efficient for any sort of military duty, having regard to the fact that when they have passed through that short period of training they are to return to civil life. I am glad to hear of the handsome offers made by the shipowners of Liverpool and elsewhere; but it is a fact that when a man is liable to be called to service at any time he finds it more difficult to get employment than when he is free. It is a tremendous experiment to require men of this kind to be open to sudden call for the performance of military duties for the defence of the country.

*MR. HALDANE: The Special Contingent, so far as training goes, will always have six months training.

MR. WALTER LONG: As I understand it they will have their six months training, but not as they receive their training now, by joining the colours and coming into contact with the officers and non-commissioned officers under whom they will serve when mobilised for service or meeting the comrades with whom they will serve.

*MR. HALDANE: They do not go out as units. They will be trained to go out as drafts on active service.

MR. WALTER LONG: That is why I have described this as a very grave experiment.

*MR. HALDANE: The Militia Reserve is a case in point.

MR. WALTER LONG: No. The the present Reserve system forms no precedent; for the Militia rejoin their old battalions and are, after civil employment, recalled to the colours under the officers and non-commissioned officers who have trained them. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that he has endeavoured to make the Bill so complete in its form that it will be a text-book for those who have to carry out the duties. For that we are indebted to him, because a great deal of the work is of such a complicated character that it will require a text-book to keep them straight. I am much interested in the county associations proposal. I have always advocated giving to local authorities in the counties much larger powers than they have at present; but I am a little appalled at the suggestion that committees are to be appointed in each county and, subject only to such general direction as will be drawn from the Army Council, are to do as they like in each county and to act in them both in respect of the county borough area and the rest of the county. The Lord-Lieutenant's and Deputy-Lieutenant's parts in the scheme are most excellent, especially the making of the appointment of Deputy-Lieutenant depend not only on work already done, but on willingness to give part of his time to developments in the future. This will undoubtedly be appreciated by everybody in the county districts; and will make the position of Deputy-Lieutenant one of greater honour, privilege, and usefulness than at present. I doubt, however, whether the right hon. Gentleman will find committees able to discharge the extremely heavy duties of a very varied kind which they will be called upon to discharge. I think that in dealing with all questions affecting the men themselves in this new territorial force it would have been far better to give at once the whole control and discretion to the commanding officer. I have been connected for more than thirty years with one of the Reserve forces of the country, and I have been privileged to command, and I know how often mistakes have been made and how frequently unnecessary expenditure has been incurred and money wasted both of which would have been saved if in the first instance commanding officers had been consulted and given discretion in these affairs. On the question of the dispensing of the conditions of service, if the discretion was given to the commanding officer at once without any reference to these committees, it would not only be giving to the commanding officers what they have proved themselves worthy of, but it would be in my opinion much more practicable. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the punishment and fines for non-attendance under the new scheme will not be more serious than they are now; that though there is an alteration, practically the regulations made by each corps in this regard have the same effect in the Volunteer battalions as his new system will have. In that case there is practically no change. It is quite true that so far as the Volunteers are concerned the conditions are those described by the right hon. Gentleman. In the Imperial Yeomanry the conditions are different, because they were put into a different position by the two Acts passed by Mr. Brodrick. But here, again, the punishment being one of fine with recovery, I am bound to say that unless the discretion rests with the commanding officer—if the committee act over his head regardless of his views and suggestions—it will make his position and his relations with his command very difficult. There is only one man who can judge of the circumstances of a man's retirement. It does not always depend on a man's calling or sickness in his family or upon matters of that sort. It most likely depends upon the man's previous record in the company and his general fitness for his duties.

*MR. HALDANE said the Army Council could give a direction if it pleased, but the association had to consult the commanding officer on all points. The reason they had put the commanding officer in a different position was this. He used before to receive the fines; under this scheme he would not, and therefore he might like someone else to be responsible.

. MR. WALTER LONG: The position is not then so bad as I thought, but I still think the right hon. Gentleman does not realise how these cases occur. A regiment is going out. The commanding officer hears that certain men cannot go for various reasons. He has them on review, and not only so, but has the history of the men as well, and there are plenty of men in the auxiliary services who could safely be relieved of two-thirds of their training; who could make themselves efficient in a few days where others would take months. Judging from my own experience, I should say that if the commanding officers had to refer these cases to a committee and produce their evidence for or against each particular case and ask the consideration of the committee instead of deciding themselves it would impose an immense amount of labour on the commanding officers at a time when they were hard pressed, and if at the same time their suggestions were not taken and the committee acted without regard to them it would have a very injurious effect upon them. With regard to the duties of the commands, the right hon. Gentleman has said that a sum of money is to be allotted to each committee by the Army Council, and assuming that that money is insufficient they are to have some additional money provided by a Supplementary Estimate if necessary. But are they to have any other powers of raising money? They will of course have no rating power, although they could receive contributions from any public body or private person, but they would have no other means of spending money except that given by the Army Council. In the event of their expenditure exceeding the amount allotted, and being approved of course by the Army Council, I presume they will be recouped, because it is obvious that if this thing runs for a year their Estimates may not always be accurate.

*MR. HALDANE: They could set up supplementary expenditure.

MR. WALTER LONG: They could? Then the right hon. Gentleman tells us that the regular adjutants would no longer deal with the Auxiliary Forces, and he seemed to be under the impression that the adjutants of the forces not only attended to the training and the military work and were necessarily the advisers of the commanding officers, but also did a great deal of the business part of the regiment. That was quite true up to the time of the predecessors of the right hon. Gentleman, Mr. Brodrick and afterwards the right hon. Member for Croydon, when the right hon. Gentleman altered the system of the Imperial Yeomanry and put them on an entirely different footing. Since they have been put under the new system we have had a commissioned officer as quartermaster, and the business part of the regiment has been done by him with a full staff. Therefore there is no necessity for any alteration in that respect. But if a very young solicitor is to be made the adjutant adviser of the commanding officer I can only say the commanding officer has my deepest sympathy. There must be a multitude of questions of the gravest kind which arise when in camp, and the commanding officer can know very little of these subjects unless he is an old soldier. Unless, therefore, there is a man who has been through adequate training in the Regular Army, and who knows not only the military law but is familiar with this kind of cases, the commanding officer will be placed at a great disadvantage. I myself should not care to be advised by the right hon. Gentleman's young solicitor, however competent he might be. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will reconsider that part of the proposal, because I am bound to say I think it will inflict great injury on regimental commanding officers. As to the course of training, I profoundly regret, as an old Army officer, that the right hon. Gentleman has found it necessary to interfere at this stage with the Imperial Yeomanry. The Volunteers are in a different position. They had to undergo some change, and their difficulties are so great that their system could not be left as it was. The right hon. Gentleman may take pride in the fact that he has taken their burdens off their shoulders and has given them some *quid pro quo* for having altered their position, but I regret the change in the Yeomanry. The Yeomanry is one of the oldest forces in the country. It has gone through several changes and has only just settled down to the new system of arrangement. It has, I think, settled down very well to a system which certainly made a very great demand on the patriotism of the men belonging to the force. However many demands may be made on the patriotism of the men in the Yeomanry they will respond to the best of their ability, but they certainly will be dismayed at this change. The amazing thing to me is that this Progressive Government should make such a change. They are in fact going back to the state of things that obtained in the Yeomany regiments thirty years ago, because then they had these periods of short training. There has already been one change in that regard, and now a fresh change is to be made. It is to be at the discretion of the commanding officer whether the training is to be eight or fifteen days. That is exactly a duty which ought not to have been thrown on commanding officers; it is a duty that should be performed by the Commander in Chief, who is the only person who can say what training is necessary to make a man efficient, and who is responsible to the King and the country for putting properly trained forces into the field.

*MR. HALDANE said it was the duty of the prescribed general officer, the Army Council, or the major-general commanding in chief, whoever the Army Council directs.

MR. WALTER LONG: Do I understand that the Army Council may direct the commanding-officer in-chief?

*MR. HALDANE: It may be the major-general commanding the division, or the commanding-officer-in-chief.

MR. WALTER LONG: That is to say, it may be someone in the neighbourhood, but it is better than I thought. Still I wish that duty was taken off the shoulders of everybody who has local duties to perform. It is often the most unpopular branch of the work to be done, and the highest authority shou'd lay down the period for training. I misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman, and therefore I hope that his explanation makes it clear that it is not left to the individual commanding officer; and I hope he may find it possible to issue general regulations on this subject from the highest possible quarter, because the higher the authority by whom they are issued the more easy it will be for the individual commanding officer to secure the fullest amount of training. I am one of those who believe from my own experience of the Yeomanry that fifteen days should constitute the minimum of training. Knowing the difficulties that commanding officers have to encounter, sometimes with officers under them, and sometimes with the men, I am convinced that we are not likely to succeed in getting the best out of this great Territorial Army unless you issue these regulations from the highest possible quarter, and do not leave the matter to local influence and the local major-general, who will naturally endeavour to consult the opinion of those under his command.

*MR. HALDANE: Our whole theory is to leave it to the General Staff to decide and, confirmed by an order in Council, the time of training may be extended beyond the period I have stated.

MR. WALTER LONG: If that is to be done, it obviously meets the main objection to which I have referred, and I make no apology for having misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman, because this is a very difficult and technical matter. I attach so much importance to it, and I know that many of those on whose behalf I am speaking, commanding officers of Yeomanry, do also, that I am very glad to have had that statement from the right hon. Gentleman. Now with regard to mobilisation. I confess I am as apprehensive about it as about another part of his scheme. I hope he will find his expectations realised. I understand, however, that this mobilisation will take place automatically. My right hon. friend in his remarks the other day asked whether it was to be practically automatic, or whether it was to be on the outbreak of war, or whether it was to be at the discretion of the Government. I understand that it is to be practically automatic.

Mr. Walter Long.

MR. HALDANE: Subject to the control of Parliament.

MR. WALTER LONG: Yes, retaining the power of Parliament; but, otherwise, mobilisation follows as a matter of course, on the outbreak of war. The right hon. Gentleman is relying on the public spirit, on the patriotism and devotion which led the men of the United Kingdom in 1900 to come forward, as they did, splendidly and magnificently, and offer their services. But remember that the right hon. Gentleman has overlooked this fact, that many of the men who came forward were not men who were then serving in existing auxiliary regiments. Many in the Auxiliary Forces were perfectly willing to go out, but were unable to do so, because of its being impossible to leave their employment or for other reasons. Is this mobilisation to be practically compulsory; that is to say, if war breaks out, are the men of the Territorial Army to be practically compelled, under certain penalties, to mobilise for six months training, after which they would be available for home defence? Are you not running a great risk of not getting the men that you require? Let us see what the position would be. Who are these men who, as in the Volunteers, will, in the majority of cases, constitute this new Territorial Army? They are employees, small clerks, and men of that kind, and, so far as the Yeomanry are concerned, one half consist of farmers and tradespeople. In the Yeomanry, as in the Volunteers, it is an undoubted fact that the great bulk of the men are not drawn as they used to be from the rural country districts, but from the towns. The circumstances of training make it almost impossible to maintain Rifle Corps in country villages as used to be the case formerly, when you had eight or ten or a dozen Volunteers in each village. They did this work in the village under the volunteer local sergeant, and were eventually formed into companies. That kind of volunteer has now almost ceased to exist. They found it impossible to respond to the demands made upon them; and, therefore, at present, in almost every case, Volunteer battalions are formed from the towns. Therefore, the effect of this mobilisation, when men are asked to enlist, must be clearly explained;

it must be made perfectly plain to them what are the conditions and possibilities of service which they are asked to undertake. The right hon. Gentleman told us that he proposed to give some privileges to those men who joined, such as exemption from being on juries, which is an advisable arrangement, and one or two other small privileges in return for the time they will give. But look at the limitations. You will have side by side, in the same office, shop or bank, two men, one of whom gives his service to the country as a soldier of the Territorial Army as a Volunteer, or one of the Yeomanry—I do not care what you call him. The other man, his neighbour, does not enter as one or the other; and yet, at the time of real pressure, we know that, as in 1900 and 1901, works are going at double and treble time, and the men are earning three and four times the wages usual in the time of peace. It will be at that very time that the reward of the man who has had the patriotism and devotion to his country to enlist will be taken away, and he will be called upon for this six months training, leaving behind him the man who had never entered the service, and who would reap all the advantages of the greater demand for labour and the higher wages. I am no pessimist, and I am a firm believer in the public spirit and patriotism of our people, but as long as human nature is human nature, you will find that men, on realising the risks they will run, will think twice before they join the reserve force. If that be true, then I think there are very few men of experience but will confirm what I state from my own personal knowledge; because not only have I been for more than thirty years a Volunteer, but I have myself gone closely into these matters; I have watched the effect of the conditions of service upon the men, and I have kept a careful record; and I believe it will be found that the conditions of service under this scheme will have a deterrent effect upon the men whom you desire to recruit. I and my hon. friend below the gangway, my brother officer, at the time of the war, enlisted 800 or 1,000 men at the headquarters of the regiment I commanded; but if we had told them that we were going to keep them six months in barracks for training and drill, we should not have got 250, much less 1,000. They wanted to sail at once; they wanted to go to the front; they wanted the attraction and excitement of war. They were not content when they were kept three weeks longer in barracks than they expected. Their conduct was beyond reproach, but their disappointment was of the bitterest, and they said reproachfully that the Government had enlisted them to send them out to fight, and not to be trained in barracks. If men realise, therefore, that they are to be mobilised for a long period of training, and not to be sent to the front, you will not get the same response to your demand that you would if the men knew that they were to be sent to the front at once. Think how serious the result would be. You would have got rid of your existing system, and if this new scheme by which you expect to fill up the gaps breaks down, you will be without the force which you now have, and you will not have men enough to man the new force. Predecessors of the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Croydon and Mr. Brodrick, have been denounced for the futility and extravagance of their proceedings. But what after all was the burden of the complaint? It was that they could not get the men, and the right hon. Gentleman has shown us to-day that he has no more reasonable authority for thinking that he would get the men. That is the crux of this question. The question to be answered is, will you get the men you require, and are you taking the right steps to get them for the new force you are raising? I do not suggest that my fellow countrymen are wanting in patriotism; I believe they are endowed with public spirit in the highest degree; still, I do believe that unless you largely modify the conditions which you are imposing upon the men whom you are seeking to make your Territorial Army, you would not get them. Then as to the question of pay. The right hon. Gentleman the other day referred to the five shillings a day granted to the Yeomanry in time of war as if that was a new departure. I think he forgot that the five shillings paid to the Yeomanry has been in existence for more than 100 years. Before the war, the Yeoman was paid seven shillings a day, and out of that he had to make what arrangements he could. Under the old system they lived in hotels, and they knew before they started that they could not possibly do so on their pay, and they spent money out of their own pockets. When something like 1,000 men passed through my hands for enlistment, they did not ask about pay, but about the conditions of service. The five shillings paid at that time had nothing to do with the ordinary pay which the yeoman got before. He is getting now the same as he was getting before. In the olden day he got 5s. 6d. a day and 1s. 6d. for forage for his horse, which is much the same thing. The fact that there is a change in the air will have an injurious effect upon the service. The Yeomanry has been changed in more ways than one, and I am sorry another change has been proposed in their pay and their conditions. The moment you took the Yeomanry under canvas and gave them sufficient pay to live decently and save money an extraordinary change came over them. In my own regiment I have seen an enormous percentage of the men take no alcoholic drinks for dinner, because they found it was more economical, and they were able to go away with twenty-five shillings or thirty shillings in their pockets. When training in camp I have always considered it necessary that there should be wooden floors for the men to sleep upon, in order to keep them off the damp ground, to avoid the danger of contracting rheumatic fever. It is astonishing what a bad effect even one case of illness of this kind has upon recruiting. I do not think it has been sufficiently recognised in the past how much public spirit and patriotism the officers and men of the Reserve Forces have shown when they have been called upon to meet large demands. I profoundly regret that anything should be done calculated to lessen the number of these men at our disposal. It would have been far better policy to have left the Imperial Yeomanry out of the question on the ground that they have gone through many changes; they might have been left alone without making any further changes for a longer period of time. Of course the Government must act up to their progressive policy, and therefore it is necessary for them to lay violent hands on the Militia. They have never even considered whether the men are likely to remain Militiamen under the new conditions. Although the Volunteers are going to be materially altered they are to be given very considerable advantages, but I see no advantage which will be conferred upon the Yeomanry, and therefore I am doubly sorry that it has been considered necessary to effect any change in their constitution at all. I think in regard to this matter everyone is justified in drawing upon his own personal experience and knowledge, because this is by far, in my opinion, the greatest and most serious question we have to discuss, as it is fraught with the greatest possible danger to our country. I need hardly say, in common with all who have spoken, that whatever the House may decide in regard to this new scheme will find loyal adherence in all parts of the country, because we are determined to do our best to get an efficient and sufficient defensive force.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham) said the scheme which had been outlined by the Secretary of State for War was one which met with the consent of all Parties in the House of Commons.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: No, not a bit of it.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER said that that was not the occasion for the House to address itself to the details of the scheme, but he thought everybody would agree that as it stood the scheme was so interdependent one part upon another that the breakdown of any one detail would have a serious effect upon the whole. He did not think a First Reading Debate was one upon which they ought to devote a great deal of time, and no doubt the House and the country would have an opportunity of looking more closely into all the details so that when the Second Reading took place they might proceed in a more competent manner to the discussion of the whole scheme. What was the right hon. Gentleman trying to solve? It was not what Army could be found to provide security for the Empire, but more a question of what Army on a voluntary basis could be found for a reasonable sum to meet that demand. The scheme before them provided a Regular Army which upon mobilisation would consist of 160,000 men, and a second branch which would provide 300,000 men. The most casual examination would show that the most effective success of the Regular Army must depend upon the second part. He agreed that the force he had mentioned would be sufficient for secondary engagements, but he did not think it would be equal to the demands of a great war. He did not think it was possible for them to make a Regular Army on anything like the basis of a Continental power. The real theatre of apprehension was India, and it was conceivable that a great engagement might take place there which would involve this country finding a very large proportion of the 300,000 men which the scheme contemplated. Whilst it was essential to attach very great importance to any proposals for the Regular Army and the changes to be made in it, he thought even greater importance should be attached to the proposals with regard to the organisation of the Territorial Army, and no mystery ought to be allowed to exist with regard to its functions. He would not now enter into the question of raids, but they were obliged to have a Home Defence Army for any such contingency. The real necessity, however, for a Home Army was to provide an adequate reserve for the Regular Army in time of national emergency, and the sooner the House fully realised that point the better it would be. The Home Army, in times of emergency, would be asked to provide a continuous stream of recruits for the depleted ranks of Regulars at the seat of war. He did not think it would be practical to ask large units of the Home Army to go to the seat of war. It would be very rare indeed that they would find a brigade ready to go abroad, and still less would be the likelihood of having anything of the size of a division ready to go abroad from the Home Army. There would, however, be a continuous stream of Reserves necessary to make good the waste in the Regular Army at the seat of war. The Secretary of State for War had proposed special battalions for that purpose, and his proposition came very near to a policy which other hon. Members and himself had urged upon the House for years past in regard to Army reform. But there was a very important difference between the proposal the right hon. Gentleman had put forward and the policy which they had urged upon the House. The Secretary for War's scheme established special battalions in addition to the present system of linked battalions known as the Cardwell system. They had advocated special depots in substitution for the linked battalions of the Cardwell system. Hon. Members on the Ministerial side of the House approved of the reduction of 10,000 men of the Regular Army, because it gave, along with other economies, a reduction in Army annual expenditure of something like £2,000,000. Most of them on that side believed that that was an economy which ought to be effected in order to increase the credit of the country, which was as important for the sinews of war as the men themselves. Whilst he fully recognised that reduction he could not help feeling that the reduction might have been more effectually made if the linked battalion system had been treated with rather less sanctity by the Secretary of State and if he had recognised that he need not retain in its entirety the system of one battalion at home and one battalion abroad. He was glad that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, speaking on behalf of the War Office the other day, had said that as time proceeded it was quite possible that substantial modification might be made in regard to the present Cardwell system, that the Government of the day had no desire to make a hard and fast rule of maintaining those battalions in their entirety, and that as opportunity occured it might be possible to arrange that two home battalions could serve as reliefs for a foreign battalion. The more one looked into the whole Army scheme, as far as was possible without being in the inner circle, the more convinced one became that they could not safely effect any real reduction of the Regular Army and at the same time maintain the linked battalion system. They could effect it by reducing the battalions aboard, but of course the time might come when it would be dangerous to do so. If they were to have an automatic reduction of the Regular Army at home it must be by a substantial infringement of the Cardwell linked battalion system. He said so because the more one looked into the scheme of the Secretary of State as to the Territorial Army the more one was struck by the fact that the amount of money devoted to that purpose was a small sum. The annual amount of Army expenditure was a little over £28,000,000, and of that the right hon. Gentleman allocated £2,800,000 to the Territorial Army. If that Territorial Army was to be carried out on a system of efficiency, if they were to get the further obligations from the men forming the force, it would be essential to place more money at its disposal than was done under the present scheme. How were they to get the money? Hon. Members opposite might sympathise with the first of the two ways in which it could be done, namely, by increasing the Army Estimates. On that side they were desirous of keeping down those Estimates. They hoped as time proceeded that about £26,000,000 or £27,000,000 would be a sufficient proportion for Imperial defence, taking into consideration the amount of money which it would be positively necessary to spend on the Navy. They believed the money should be found from the existing Estimates, and the only way in which they could get it was by reducing the expenditure on the Regular Army. He hoped that when the Bill was going through Committee more money would be placed at the disposal of the Territorial Army. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had emphasised that point, showing how the whole question of obtaining the men largely depended on the question of money. The men who would form the Territorial Army would be largely drawn from the industrial classes, and although they might appeal with success to the patriotism of those men, there was a point beyond which they could hardly ask their patriotism, and that was to lose money which was necessary for themselves and their wives at home, while they were going through the period to make themselves efficient. He thought it was conceivable that under the scheme of the Secretary of State the county associations might be asked in their different centres to take that matter into their serious consideration and to act as an advising body to the Army Council. The Secretary of State had to-day stated, roughly speaking, what was to be the composition of the county associations. They ought to represent every class of industry known in the counties; he did not think they could be too comprehensively representative if they were to be of any real use. They should be drawn from the landed gentry and all classes of employers, and labour also should be adequately represented. If that were the case the question of the payment of men during their period of training might well form one of the subjects which they could consider and on which they would make recommendations to the Army Council. By appealing to the patriotism of the employers it might be that in some cases they would be persuaded not only to allow their men holidays but also to pay them during the period of training; but he was quite sure that it would be found that there were many men who would not go into training unless some adequate arrangement was made in addition to what was now proposed. With the added obligations which were proposed, and looking at the Territorial Army as the real Reserve of the Regular Army in time of emergency, it was essential that every opportunity should be given to the different units to make themselves as efficient as possible. Those who had served in the different branches realised that that could only be done by an adequate staff of non-commissioned officers, and they could not be obtained unless the country was prepared to pay a proper amount for them. He would rather see an increase than a reduction of expenditure in that direction. When the Bill got into Committee he would do his small share of the work of improving it in the direction of making the Territorial Army a real success. As to the question of officers, the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the increase of the number was one of the most important reforms of the Army. He was struck by the speech the other day of the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, who asked the Secretary of State whether he could not see his way to give further facilities for granting commissions to men from the non-commissioned ranks than had been granted in the past. There was a great deal to be said for that suggestion, and it was a matter in the Territorial Army where the county associations could do serviceable work. There were many well educated, highly respectable men serving in the ranks who had made themselves most efficient soldiers, but had not been able to become officers. They would undoubtedly, if further facilities were given, make a serviceable addition to the commissioned officers in the Territorial Army. He sincerely hoped that greater facilities would be given in future for men from the non-commissoned ranks to become commissioned officers. The remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin with regard to the Yeomanry were more appropriate to the Committee stage than to a Second Reading debate. He absolutely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that no discouragement should be given to either the Yeomanry or the Volunteers in recruiting. The payment given to the Yeomanry in the past had been of a very generous character, and he thought it had been a great mistake to give so much in the early days. It was always easy to give an increase, but it was difficult to reduce an amount which had once been given. If the present three branches were absorbed in the Territorial Army they must make an attempt to start on a uniform basis. He hoped that in considering the new scheme hon. Members would not be actuated by sectional prejudices, and that they would recognise that if any real success was to be achieved the whole of the anomalies and inequalities must be removed. He hoped that either the county associations or the Army Council would see that a sufficient amount was paid to the Volunteers so that they would not suffer under the scheme during the time they were out training, and also that nothing would be done to discourage men from either joining or remaining in the force. He only hoped that the scheme which had been produced by the right hon. Gentleman would not suffer the fate of its two predecessors. In its conception it was scientific, although many alterations might be made in its details, as he believed the Secretary for War himself would admit. It was for the House to sink all sectional and Party feeling and do their best to approach the subject in a patriotic spirit. If they did so they would set an example to those outside, and there would be a hope of seeing this session a scheme of Army reform which would be satisfactory to the Army and the nation as a whole.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said he was inclined to agree with the hon. Member for the Chippenham Division that, as regarded economy, the new scheme of the Secretary for War was not likely to be effective—in fact that it would lead to increased expense. However, he differed from the hon. Gentleman when he proposed that, in order to expend a greater amount of money on the Territorial force, they should cut down the expense on the Regular Army. He thought that was a most narrow view of the military necessities of the nation. He maintained that it was in proportion to our military fighting strength that our alliances would be valued by other countries. The value of our alliance would be based on the strength, not of our territorial forces, but of those whom we were able to equip and send abroad in case of war in which our allies might be engaged. If the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War looked at the real opinion of the Chancelleries of Europe he would find that they did not like to see a constant disposition on the part of Parliament to reduce our fighting force, and to rely on our Territorial Army, which was a selfish force only designed to protect the shores of these Islands, and not to take part with the armies of our allies against a common danger. The scheme now unfolded by the Secretary for War followed a regular sequence. The right hon. Gentleman was to provide a field force which was capable of immediate mobilisation for war, to the extent of 150,000 or 160,000, rather than 50,000 or 60,000 as at present. So far, so good. If the right hon. Gentleman carried that out no soldier would object; but he thought the composition of that force was not satisfactory; because the right hon. Gentleman would have to rely upon so many thousands of Yeomanry to make up his cavalry divisions. If the Yeomanry were to be available for immediate mobilisation they must be efficient all the time. The hon. Member for the Chippenham Division had laid stress on the fact that the Territorial Army would supplement the field force; but that was not what it was going to do. If the Territorial Army chose to supplement the Regular Army they might do so; but there was nothing in the Bill, so far as he understood, or in the principles on which the Territorial Army was to be raised, which made it necessary for it to supplement the Regular Force on mobilisation. There was to be no changes in the linked-battalion system, and the provision in regard to reserves would remain as now, except that when the new system came into full operation, the Reserves would automatically be reduced, whereas they now stood at 115,000.

*MR. HALDANE said it would have no effect on the Reserves.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY said that then there was to be no change in the linked-battalion system, no effect on the supply of reliefs, but the fighting force was to be reduced by 16,000, and a saving was to be made of £1,100,000 in organisation. There was always a keen division in the House as to whether that was or was not a right thing to do. He maintained, as an old soldier, that the reduction of the fighting force was unwise, and would be dearly indeed bought by that reduction of £1,100,000. The right hon. Gentleman had also brought into being his third-battalion system, out of which he was going to create a special contingent enlisted on a non-Regular basis, but which was to be of great value when mobilisation occurred. But when the recruits for those third battalions first began to be trained they were only seventeen or seventeen and a half years of age. It was true that on mobilisation they were to be trained for six months, but even then many of them would be under eighteen years, and would be unable to bear arms in a foreign country except under the most difficult circumstances. That would be unwise, although he admitted that if time were given for their training they would be very valuable troops, and provide, very rapidly, drafts for the non-combative forces. The right hon. Gentleman had said that as the result of the institution of these third battalions they would secure on mobilisation 78,000 men, but in his opinion they could not look for more than 25,000 or 30,000. Again, the changes that were going to be introduced in the field force were comparatively small, some in a satisfactory direction, and some not. It should be clearly understood that to set up a territorial force for the purpose of actual fighting would be practically useless unless it had had six months of continuous training after mobilisation, in addition to the previous short training. He also thought that the force could not be constituted to purpose unless there was a large measure of willingness on the part of the different units to forget, he would not say the prejudices, but the various forms of regimental pride and *esprit de corps* on which all of them laid so much stress. Yeomen, Militiamen, and Volunteers would have to forget and lay aside a good deal, and it was on the faith that they would all do that that the right hon. Gentleman absolutely relied in regard to the constitution of his force. From the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had worked out his proposals, he saw difficulties in the way of his reconstituting the force. He hoped, however, that the right hon. Gentleman's expectations would be realised, and that that willingness might exist, so that the common fighting instincts of the country might be welded into one body, out of which a new fighting force might be created. But when it was created would it be reliable? It could not be reliable unless it was properly trained. But the system of training differed, and there would be, he thought, some difficulty in maintaining the high level of some of the battalions to which hon. Members were so ready to refer. He wished to ask a question as to the relations of the county associations to this territorial force, not only in regard to its being a constitutional force but also in reference to its being a reliable force. He understood that the Army Council would say to a particular county: "We have considered your resources and we call upon you for your quota of so much in cavalry and infantry;" and that being laid down, the new county association was called into being in order to provide that quota. How was the Blankshire county association to proceed to furnish the clothing necessary for the recruits? The recruiting sergeants would have to act under their orders, and the county associations must be able to say: "Yes, we can find you so many cavalry soldiers and so many infantry soldiers." The force having been raised, it became the duty of the county associations to clothe the men and furnish them with uniforms, boots, and whatever equipment was necessary for their short training and also for their longer training when they were wanted. How was that to be done? Orders for boots, etc., would be given to the most prominent manufacturers in the county, and the result must be extravagance and want of similarity in equipment of the forces from different counties. That might not hurt when they were in their own areas; but when they were brought together it was essential that the equipment should be identical in order that it might be supplied from the common stores of the Army or division. He saw considerable practical difficulty in regard to the equipment of the men being carried out on the basis of such an organisation as that suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. Then the county association had to train the men in what he might call the ordinary organisation; they were to see to their rifle ranges and their rifle and cadet clubs; but he could not help thinking that in carrying out this work they would need not so much a county Army organisation as one clear-headed Army official who would weld all the forces into one line. When the county quota was equipped and trained, if it was sent out for fifteen days in bad weather its equipment would be destroyed. Was the county association to re-equip them? If so, were they to say to the House that they wanted so many thousands of pounds for that service? Was the money then to be sent to the county association to be spent by them? If the right hon. Gentleman expected any economy from that system it seemed to him that he was very sanguine. He could quite understand that excellent work might be done by the county association in regard to soldiers' families' associations in the county, and in finding employment for members of the force who had left it; but he had great doubt whether they would be able to deal with the manning and equipment of corps in their own county. He would be glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman lay it down that it was absolutely essential to the scheme that the men of every quota must come up to the minimum training laid down by his regulations to which he hoped he would adhere unflinchingly, although he seemed rather to shadow forth the possibility of considerable powers of relaxation being given. If a power of relaxation were given there would undoubtedly be great pressure for it to be used, and whoever was responsible he did not think they should allow any relaxation from the very small amount of training provided for. It seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman and his advisers had overlooked the great difference between a Volunteer force which found its home in a big town and one which found its home in a scattered rural area, and he doubted very much whether the same scheme would work equally well in a big town and in regard to a Volunteer battalion recruited from a large rural area. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would have to recast some of his proposals in that regard. For instance, the clever young attorney might very comfortably do the work of the force in a town in which he had his being; but he did not think he would be able to travel over a large area and visit each little town in which there was a group of Volunteers, and perform his duties with success. The right hon. Gentleman had also foreshadowed that there would be the lowest possible penalties for offences committed by members of the Territorial Army. He did not wish to be harsh, but surely the right hon. Gentleman would allow that, after having been trained as soldiers, they ought to be treated as soldiers, and that acts of insubordination ought not to be lightly passed over. If they were he would get very little value out of his Territorial Army. Then as to the special contingent he understood that no uniform length of service was laid down. That seemed to him to make the working of it a little difficult.

*MR. HALDANE said that regulations would be laid down.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY said of course regulations would no doubt be laid down, but he thought he was not doing the right hon. Gentleman any injustice when he said that this territorial part of his scheme was a great experiment which might have results which could not be foreshadowed. While urging the right hon. Gentleman not to be too sanguine, he trusted that the country would enable him to carry out his scheme.

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said he had not intended to take part in the debate but was induced to do so by the remarks of his right hon. friend in order to point out that there was great danger in this or any other scheme unless they kept their eyes upon countries under the British flag oversea. The point made by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman and by others was that it was useless to suppose that the force to be created in the way suggested by the Secretary for War could be of any use for war. Some hon. Members qualified that statement by saying that it might be useless unless it was of the proper War Office sealed pattern. The danger, he ventured to point out to hon. Gentleman opposite, was that if their argument was carried to its logical conclusion we shut ourselves out at one fell swoop from all chance of Imperial co-operation from the Colonies in time of war. The Colonies would never be got to believe that the only troops fit for war were the War Office sealed pattern soldiers. The colonial was perfectly convinced that without the long training he could be a very useful soldier, and that was only reasonable when one reflected on the conduct of the Canadian and Victorian Forces in the late war. They had not been under training six months. And to carry the argument further, he might point out that it was Lord Selborne who, to his great credit, pointed out that when the history of the war came to be written it would not be the achievements of the British soldier that would create such admiration, it would be the achievements of the Boers. They were now our fellow subjects, and we might have to rely on them greatly in the future. Those men had not had seven years training. Their organisation was of the loosest, but their work was of the highest. If he intervened now it was to warn those who took too high a martinet view of the soldier. If they insisted upon it in the future they would cut themselves off from all colonial help; and when they reflected that Australia was reorganising her forces, that Canada had reorganised hers and was going to organise still further, that the whole of South Africa was concerning herself with this problem also, and that the Colonial Conference was going to discuss the question, they would be wise, while appealing for unity, not to lose sight of the fact that we hoped to find unity among all the forces of the Crown both here and over seas.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division had warned the House that many of those who had served as officers in His Majesty's Army were too prone to take a high martinet view of the War Office sealed pattern soldier. He was not one of those who regarded this matter from that point of view, but he would ask the hon. and gallant Member to recollect that the late war was a very peculiar one, and was fought under exceptional conditions which enhanced the value of men who had not gone through such training as the British soldiers. He could not help thinking that where disciplined troops met disciplined troops some years of training, he would not say how many, would provide troops of more value than the Colonial troops, brave and gallant as they undoubtedly were, who had not had that training. The right hon. Gentleman, after more than a year's consideration, had introduced a large scheme of military reform. He did not find fault with the time the right hon. Gentleman had taken to produce the scheme, because both the right hon. Gentleman and himself were old enough to have seen the fate which met immature proposals. He found fault with the fact that the House was expected to criticise the measure in such a short space of time. He was grateful for the fact that there was to be no legislation by reference. That at all events would enable the House to come to a conclusion in a shorter time, but even then the period given to the House was not sufficient to enable it to make any real comprehensive criticism of the measure. Why should the right hon. Gentleman expect the House of Commons to criticise this measure, which was supposed to be the *dernier cri* of Army orgnisation, in the course of a few hours? Surely the military defence of the country was a question which should occupy some time, and be well thought out. The criticisms of the Bill, with two exceptions, contained the same fault. With the exception of the criticisms of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, whose marvellous destructive powers of criticism and encyclopædic knowledge excited admiration, and placed him above criticism, and of his right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, there was too much *ego* in the criticisms levelled at the Bill. All contained the bacillus of individual opinion cultivated in the gelatine of the particular Member's own peculiar ideas. The *ego* coccus was present everywhere. Each critic found fault with any particular where he disagreed and praised the right hon. Gentleman on those points which were in accordance with his individual views. If the speaker were a good Party man he agreed all round, and he (Colonel Lockwood) congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having many good Party men on his side of the House. Would the right hon. Gentleman for a moment sink the *ego* and ask himself if he was sure he would obtain the consent of the predominant partner—the nation—to his scheme? He ventured to say that unless the right hon. Gentleman got, not the mere acceptance, but the enthusiasm of the nation with him the scheme must fall dead. It would be sterile and would join the limbo of the other schemes that had gone before. The right hon. Gentleman had said that it was the best scheme he could work out: would the nation's enthusiasm help him to work it out? He was sorry to hear the right hon. Gentleman say they had no desire to encourage the military spirit. Was that a "bit of sugar for the bird?" We had been called a "nation of shopkeepers," but he could not see that there was anything antagonistic to that in encouraging a military spirit to protect ourselves. Had it not been said "the strong man armed kept his house and goods safe," or words to that effect? We did not want to show any bravado, but we did want to keep what we had got. He knew there were Members of the House who were opposed to him and those who thought with him. He respected their opinion; but as he quite disagreed with them, he did not appeal to them. He only appealed to those who believed in the necessity for an army at all. He would draw attention to an article by the Prime Minister which was lately published. The cold reception the French people had given it showed how aware they were, as a practical nation, of the necessity of their being able to protect themselves. The right hon. Gentleman's new Army Council seemed to him to be a sort of new army county council, and he was certainly alarmed at the amount of work the right hon. Gentleman proposed to put upon it. The lord-lieutenant of the county was to be the head of it. He presumed that gentleman was to be more ornamental than anything else. Up to the present the lords-lieutenant had been political appointments, and though in Essex they had been particularly fortunate in having a lord-lieutenant who had been connected with the Yeomanry for some three years, he could not help thinking that in other counties there were aged estimable gentlemen who, however ornamental they might be, would be strangely out of place in a military line. He would like also to know later on if the secretaries of these organisations were to be paid.

*MR. HALDANE: Yes.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD said he was glad to hear that, because that got rid of one of his great objections, which was doing anything for nothing. There was no doubt that the work would be very great. He had been a Member of the House for some years, and he was perfectly certain that Members of the House of Commons would be asked to serve. But how could they find the time to do it? How were the best men in the country, the most busy men, to find time to devote to such a large amount of work as the right hon. Gentleman proposed to put upon them? Then there was the eternal question of money. He regretted to understand that there was to be an appeal for funds. He could foresee perfectly well that the lord-lieutenant would be expected to put down a good round sum, and Members of Parliament would be told, regardless of Party, to show their patriotism and their readiness to assist in furthering the scheme brought forward on the other side of the House by giving subscriptions. That he objected to very strongly indeed. The subscriptions paid by Members of Parliament were already sufficiently large, and he viewed with alarm any increase in that direction. Honestly, he very much doubted whether it was the right line to proceed upon. He was sorry that the right hon. Gentleman had touched very lightly on one point of importance, namely, the attitude of employers towards the men who served as Volunteers. Certainly the right hon. Gentleman said he had received most excellent communications from various large shipping employers, and one or two other big employers in the Kingdom; but he had hoped to hear a little more than that, because he believed that point was most vital to the question of Volunteers and Yeomanry getting leave to serve in camps. He understood from the right hon. Gentleman that there was a certain amount of discipline in camp which he looked upon as absolutely necessary. He understood, also, that there was to be fifteen days training, which might be shortened in certain cases to eight days, and that a certain amount of training was obligatory. But unless they were to have co-operation on the part of the employers of labour, he very much feared that the conditions would be found to press heavily on a great number of men. As to the money given to Volunteer officers, it was not their outfit alone, but their annual expenses which were heavy, and he did not see how they were going to be assisted in that respect. Another question he would like to ask. There was to be equality between the Volunteers and the Militia. If the Volunteers were to be treated exactly on all fours with the Militia, and to be recruited exactly in the same way, though they were recruited from very different classes, he anticipated that there would be very considerable difficulty. Then there was the question of rifle ranges, though that was not in the Bill; he supposed that would be left to the county associations. It was a biggish job to deal with, and would give a considerable amount of trouble. He supposed that the much attacked landlords—those "scoundrelly landlords"—would be asked to show their patriotism by letting them have land at a cheap rate. He had made considerable inquiries as to how the scheme would be received. Some of the replies he had got were favourable, but a great many were not favourable. He would read one which was typical, from an officer of the Yeomanry—

> "I am afraid that the proposed reduction of pay would upset your troops. I have been in conversation with a great many of them, and they say that they will not take on for another four years, having to give three months notice in writing, and pay a fine of £5. Then worse is the reduction of pay. You have about twenty members whose time expires between now and the training, and if the scheme comes into force I am afraid they will not take on."

Unless the right hon. Gentleman succeeded in getting an unusual response to his scheme, not only in strength but also in enthusiasm, that scheme must decidedly and absolutely fail. He supposed the right hon. Gentleman had done his best to consult those of the Volunteers and Militia who were likely to afford him assistance; but as far as his own inquiries went he had not found any real enthusiasm in favour of the scheme.

*MR. ACLAND (Yorkshire, Richmond) said the elementary point which interested hon. Members on the Ministerial side was whether the scheme was more or less likely to drift, if adopted, to conscription. He would like to look at it from the point of view of a private of Volunteers, now a junior Volunteer officer. The point had been raised that the scheme was a short and easy step to compulsory service. He thought he might say fairly that there were three methods by which this country could be defended. The first was wholly by the Regular Forces, independent of the people, and paying for all they wanted—the scheme towards which the late Government were inclined. The second was the adoption of compulsory service in one form or another; in which case they would avoid perhaps a very great expense. The third was a small, but very efficient, Regular Force, well paid, and backed by a Volunteer Force properly organised. That would not be so expensive. The right hon. Gentleman in putting his proposals before the House had apparently tried to adopt the third course, which could not be said to be in the direction of the alternative of conscription, but, in the opinion of many of them, would be found to go very much in the contrary direction. He thought they had gone far enough to be able to see that the scheme, to a certain extent, at all events, was not likely to fail or bring us nearer to the system of conscription, but that it was likely to succeed and take us much further away from the possibility of conscription than we were at the present moment. For, firstly, he was struck by the fact that there was a good deal of encouragement of the scheme from all sides of the House. It was a splendid thing on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover that he should have said that in spite of the quarter from which the scheme had come he would do his best, so far as he could agree with parts of it, to help it forward and give it a good chance of success. It was also in favour of the scheme that it would help to get rid of the distrust that had been so marked in some quarters between the Volunteer Army and the Regular Army. In the past the Regular officers had looked to the Volunteer Army for drafts, and primarily it was as a draft producer that the Home force had been regarded. Now the Regulars would be able to get what they wanted without interfering with the Volunteers, and the Volunteers would be able to organise those things which they could tackle most successfully, namely, home defence and expansion without being called upon to furnish drafts as well. There was another thing which made for the success of the scheme which officers had been looking forward to for years, and that was that in future their arrangements would be based upon definite principles of organisation. In the past there had been a great deal that was haphazard in the raising of the Volunteer forces. Some patriotic man interested in a particular arm would offer to raise artillery in some inland town, and then he would be told by the War Office that his offer would be accepted, but that they could only provide him with some coast defence guns. The result had been that coast defence artillery had been allowed to spring up inland, and they had never endeavoured to see that each locality should provide what would be required in any great emergency. When those interested in the Auxiliary Forces realised that somebody really cared for the work they were doing, their efforts would be very much more encouraged, and people would be more likely to come forward and assist the nation when they realised the new spirit. He thought the brigade organisation would be a great help. He could not resist the temptation of giving a very simple instance in regard to the corps to which he belonged, namely, the London Volunteer Corps of the Civil Service Rifles. In that corps they would naturally expect perfect simplicity; but, as a matter of fact, there were three different and distinct organisations. In the first place they were a rifle battalion, and they had to apply to the Rifle Brigade if they wanted to know whether they had to slope or trail arms when they passed Buckingham Palace. In the second place, for another purpose they were under one of the colonels of the Guards, who inspected them once a year in Hyde Park; and, in the third place, they came under another organisation when they went to camp, which was quite different from the other two, and under which they had learned to salute very well coming in and out of camp. In regard to other matters they had been left very much to their own devices. That was a kind of thing which ought not to exist, and in future, under the new scheme, they would work under a system of organisation which anybody could understand. They would feel that they were more fully organised, and that the nation was thinking about them much more seriously. With regard to the criticisms which had been made upon the likely demands of the Army Council, he was not afraid of the severity of those demands, because the area in which the division was to be built up was not the county area, but the area of the Grouped Regimental District. Presumably the demands would not be made until after the associations had been formed, and until they had had time to look round to see what forces each county could reasonably be expected to provide. Then the Divisional General would come down and make his final arrangements. But these would be done in close consultation with the associations. The War Office had done its best to administer the Volunteers under a single system which was not very elastic. Under the new scheme of decentralisation the training would be done under the guidance of the Divisional General who would be given a free hand. Those Divisional Generals would be able to study and find out what each battalion could and could not do, and under this system there was much more hope of local peculiarities being appreciated, and local possibilities would be used to the best advantage. He was glad that in future Volunteers were to be much more on their own basis than they had been in the past, and they were to have a much better chance of making themselves efficient. It had been said that the scheme appeared to allow too many Regular officers to be connected with the Home Army. On the other hand it had been said that there were too few officers, that the adjutants were going to be withdrawn, and that the connection with the Regulars would be too weak. The reason was that it was considered at the War Office that the Home Force, although trained by Regulars, should not be commanded by Regulars any more than was absolutely necessary. They wanted to institute a system of training which would not only train existing battalions or new battalions, but under which those responsible for the training would remain in the country in order to train those who would be called upon to replace any battalion which had gone off to a foreign country. If a battalion left the country with its adjutant and permanent staff there would not be a single person left behind to train the men who might be willing to take the place of those who had gone abroad. Under the new scheme they were imitating somewhat the Swiss army system, under which there was a number of regular professional soldiers as the training staff external to the composition of the unit, and they remained behind when the units took the field. He believed that the system of Volunteer battalions being trained by Regulars, and yet not having within them a Regular officer as adjutant, had many advantages. In many battalions he was certain that a Volunteer adjutant would get more hard work out of his officers, because he would be better acquainted with the way in which they were accustomed to avoid hard work than a Regular officer would be. Then, again, the Volunteers were jealous of the Regulars and wished to have as little connection with them as possible. It had been said that Volunteer officers desired at once to be put into the higher commands, and that the less Regular officers had to do with the Home Army the better. They could not have two principles of training in the Army; they must train both Home and professional armies on the same principles. They must apply the science of war alike to the two Armies. He admitted that they had not got in the Volunteer force many people fitted for the higher command, but he believed that when Volunteer officers in the Home Army had fitted themselves for those higher commands they would be appointed to them. There would be no possibilty of their reaching a high state of efficiency unless they welcomed the training which the Regulars would bring to them, and unless they showed the clearest possible desire to acquire the knowledge the Regulars possessed and applied it to their own force. The new Army scheme meant that they would have a Home Army not bossed, but guided and trained, by Regulars, and that gave them some real hope for military efficiency in the future as well as willing service. On the whole he thought the conditions laid down were such as the home force, as a whole, would be very willing to accept. The county associations did not need to be all set up at once, and there would be plenty of time for giving the new organisation the fullest consideration. He thought it would help the House in forming a judgment on the scheme that it had been made clear that the requirement of six months training would only take place in case of emergency and the hour of trial such as would necessitate or justify the calling out of the Volunteers at the present time. There could be no object in training the Volunteers and dislocating the industry of the country unless there was a real emergency which would justify their being called out. As to the three months notice and the fine of £5, he thought that there again their fears had been relieved by the declaration that it was only meant to do what an ordinary efficient battalion did at present, namely, to set up a definite bar against the man who wanted to throw over the service for no sufficient reason at all. He thought there would be some difficulty in handing over absolutely to commanding officers the enforcing of the penalties. Commanding officers would be glad to be relieved from that invidious duty, and his own opinion was that it should be done in some more impersonal way, say by the county association. There was another criticism which he believed had more weight. It seemed to be intended in time of emergency when it was necessary to embody the home force to rely upon what was a very practical form of compulsion, namely, that of saying to a man, "Either you go abroad or else you are not fit to be a citizen of the country." Volunteers objected to being faced with that alternative. They did not want to go abroad on account of home ties, and yet they did not like to be placed in a position where their action might be considered little short of cowardice. They might not find that in that matter a hard and fast line was to be laid down. He hoped it would always be possible to return to the system of what were called "special service contingents" —men in each battalion who from year to year undertook to go abroad if an emergency arose during the year, so that the War Office would always know upon what men they could rely. There was a great deal to be said for that proposal.

It had often been discussed by Volunteer officers and approved by them. There were several good grounds for believing that the new scheme, so far as they knew it, possessed all the elements of success. It had received a very warm welcome from many Members, it would make it much more possible for the Field and the Home Armies to be on good terms with one another, it would put the Volunteers on a better basis from which they could work out their own salvation, and the conditions of service were such as would not make any patriotic man hesitate when it came to a question of whether he would transfer his services. It was said that the scheme must inevitably mean much greater expense. No doubt it would be an expensive business to have a Home Army such as was aimed at, but he believed that in the long run it was only by having a strong and organised home Army that we could hope for anything like reasonable proportion in the matter of expenditure. There were some who supposed that it was always the wish of a Liberal Government to check expenditure by decreasing the Army. But a Liberal Government would not be always in office. If they came to days when there was no desire to check expenditure and if the Home Army was still in an unorganised condition, it appeared to him that nothing would prevent expenditure leaping upwards again. He hoped and believed that both Parties would adopt the policy of having a small and efficient Home Army backed up by a really efficient Regular Army. If the Home Army could not be organised there was the certainty of an enormous increase in expenditure some day. On the other hand, if it could be organised, there was the hope that both parties wouldco-operate in keeping expenditure within fairly moderate limits. He was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil say that in his opinion the creation of the proposed Army was a gigantic menace to peace. If the hon. Member referred to the field force, surely if we had to maintain a large number of men, it was infinitely better that they should be properly organised so that they could go abroad as complete divisions, and as parts of a scientific organisation; but if he referred to the proposals in connection with the home force, his opinion was that the truth would be found to be entirely contrary to what the hon. Member had said. The scheme was not a menace to peace at all. The only really weighty criticism of the scheme by military men was: "It is all very well, but there is this bad thing about it—we shall have to think very much more than we have done in the past as to whether the nation will be behind us in any war which may be coming off." He believed that the greatest guarantee for peace under the scheme was the thought that the nation would be behind them. Given a proper spirit of patriotism the scheme would bring with it, not only efficiency and economy, but a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace and good will among the nations of the world.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said the hon. Member for the Richmond division had sung a pæan of praise on the scheme. It reminded him of the admiration with which Conan Doyle's Brigadier Gerard regarded his beloved master Napoleon. He thought the most hostile would be grateful for a good many parts of the scheme. Certainly there was no Auxiliary officer who would not welcome the scheme for the organisation of the Auxiliary Forces. A great many of them had always felt that what the Auxiliary Forces lacked was some sort of organisation whereby if they were called out they might really be effective. The right hon. Gentleman had claimed that in all the discussions on the Army he had been thorough, and that he had gone into every question connected with the Army with the one object of finding out whether each particular branch of the Army justified its existence. And yet he thought he detected in the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman something in which he had not been quite so thorough as perhaps one might have been led to expect. That was as to the question of the third battalions and their relationship to the existing Militia. It seem to him that the right hon. Gentleman had decapitated the Militia altogether. He had taken away the *cadres* and the officers. He asked the right hon. Gentleman what his object was in doing away with the Militia and turning them into third battalions? What was the object of keeping the Militia *cadres* up as part of the territorial force? He could understand his doing it as a matter of sentiment, but he could not understand why the right hon. Gentleman split the

Militia into two parts, making one part useful, and keeping the other merely as ornamental. He felt almost inclined to say that the right hon. Gentleman's action in this respect was a hindrance to the other parts of the Territorial Army. They must remember that there would be three branches of the Territorial Army. If there was to be that passion for uniformity in the Territorial Army which apparently existed at the War Office there would be a tendency to undue competition in the different branches, and a difficulty of obtaining recruits for each. As to the branch of the Service with which he was more immediately connected—the Yeomanry—he associated himself very thoroughly with the remarks of the right hon. Member for South Dublin, who had put the case very concisely. The Yeomanry resented the proposed changes in the corps, and although he admitted that they would do their best to carry them through, at the same time he asked why they could not be left alone? The Yeomanry had gone through a great many changes in the last few years, both before and since the South African War; and he was justified in saying that the Yeomanry were now the most efficient branch of all the Auxiliary Forces, or of any force Regular or irregular serving under the Crown. That had not been attained without considerable difficulty. No doubt it had lately been difficult to find the men and to reconcile them to the increased amount of work and training expected from them; and it was likewise difficult to reconcile the officers to the number of courses of instruction which they had to go through in order to become qualified. It was a pity that the right hon. Gentleman should propose to alter the whole conditions of the force and throw it into the confusion from which it had just emerged. As to the question of pay, he quite agreed that on active service all branches of the Auxiliary Service would have to be paid alike, but he did not see how that applied in time of peace, because the right hon. Gentleman must remember that the men who formed the Yeomanry, the Volunteers, and the Militia were not all of the same calibre. Taking the average Yeomanry regiments, the men were drawn from a higher stratum than those of either the Volunteers or the Militia. He did not think that the right hon. Gentleman would call the Yeomanry a luxurious corps; but it was true that when they went out for their annual training they regarded it as a sort of holiday, and to use the popular phrase they did like "to do themselves well." He did not think they would care to live on Army rations, and the result would be that they would supplement those rations out of their own pockets, and so be deprived of that little pocket money which they had derived from their training pay. The only alternative was that they would not be able to recruit the same class of men for the Yeomanry in future, and so would lose splendid material for keeping up the effective strength of the nation, and then the right hon. Gentleman would not have at his disposal the 300,000 for the Territorial Army on which he was reckoning. Then the right hon. Gentleman proposed to diminish the period of training for the Yeomanry. When that amounted to sixteen days officers could rely on the whole of their men turning out on parade except those who were sick or suffering from casualties. All the men should have an equal scale of instruction, but if some were only trained for a day here and there, or for eight days and others for sixteen days, the result would be that no troop or squadron or regiment would be complete, and the tendency would be to diminish rather than to increase their efficiency. He thought he descried in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the other day a tendency not to induce the county associations to insist on a very long training. So far as he understood, the money was to be found by the county associations; that it was to be expended by them as they thought best; and that money saved was to be devoted to courses of lectures.

*MR. HALDANE said that that had nothing to do with the training. It was for the Commander-in-Chief to say what money should be devoted to giving courses of lectures.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY said he gathered then that the county associations would not control the courses of lectures.

*MR. HALDANE said that the money for the annual training would go to the General Officer Commanding.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY said that in that event his objection would not have the effect anticipated; but there would be all the same dual control of the financial arrangements. There would be a contingent fund: some things would have to be found by the county associations and some by the commanding officer. Another point was whether the kind of training of the Yeomanry was to be altered under the right hon. Gentleman's scheme. At present they were trained practically as mounted infantry—a name which was not very popular—and they were armed with long rifles and not with swords. Did the right hon. Gentleman propose that the Yeomanry were henceforth to be trained as Regular cavalry and given again some *arme blanche* as before the war? Again it would be a gigantic mistake that the adjutants of the Territorial Army should be drawn from that Army and not as hitherto from the Regular Army itself. It was an advantage to have adjutants from the Regular Army, changed every three years, who would bring fresh advice to the commanding officer, the other officers, and the men, as to the latest theories of cavalry tactics. That was the only way to keep the Auxiliary regiments up to the proper up-to-date pitch. Adjutants drawn solely from the Auxiliary Forces would continue in office for many years, with the result that the regiments would become "stick-in-the mud regiments." He hoped that that point would have the serious attention of the right hon. Gentleman. It struck him that the special squadron which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to set up would be of a very composite character and would not have sufficient efficiency to be sent out in the first line of 160,000 men. That squadron would consist of scattered individuals drawn from different troops and regiments, and until they were assembled they would never see the officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, under whom they would have to serve when in the field.

*MR. HALDANE said that every regiment would furnish a troop.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY said that might be so, but he did not understand that it would be a cohesive body. The troops would not have any touch as the Yeomanry troops had at present with their officers, but they would be gathered together in a haphazard manner, and he thought it would be quite impossible for them properly to take part in the annual training if a portion of the force was pledged to go abroad with the first expeditionary force while other portions were not. He would not like to command a regiment if it were pointed out that one portion was for active service, and the other only for play. He thought such a condition of things would cause considerable heart-burning, and in his opinion that part of the scheme would require serious reconsideration. He did not know whether the horse supply for the annual training was to be found by the county association, but he hoped that if economies were to be effected it would be in the direction of the horse supply. He had always been of opinion that the £5 horse allowance was far too much, and he would rather see that amount reduced and increased pay given than leave the matter as the right hon. Gentleman suggested it should be left. There could be no doubt that in the same year in the past the Government had paid £15 or £20 for the same horse, which had passed from one training to another. He hoped that in future the right hon. Gentleman would see that the horse was a *bona fide* animal. The sum of £5 was, as he had said, too much, especially in the case of hired animals. If the horse was the trooper's property, the matter might be different, but if the horse was hired from a dealer the result of the present system was that the dealer charged £5 for a horse which under other circumstances could be hired for £2. He hoped the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman would be successful if passed, although he had some doubt as to its details. He supported it, however, to a certain extent, but upon grounds somewhat different from those advanced by some hon. Members, especially those below the Gangway. He thought it would tend to increase the military spirit, and he agreed with his hon. friend the Member for Essex that they ought not to be ashamed of the military spirit, but ought to do everything to increase their efficiency. Instead of a scheme of earth-works for protecting the country against compulsion he believed the earth-works would prove to be the foundation of the compulsory edifice, as he did not think that we should ever have a satisfactory Army until the country recognised that it was the duty of every man, if not to serve compulsorily, to be compulsorily trained. He thought in years to come, possibly when a Conservative Government was in office, some system of compulsory training would have to be adopted, in order to provide an Army large enough for the purpose of policing our great Empire.

MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) remarked that a great deal had been said in the course of the debate about the patriotism upon which we could count, and he thought that we might count upon a great deal. He could remember the first enrolment in a popular sense of the Volunteer Force. He joined that force as a schoolboy, and he still remembered the wave of patriotism which swept over the country when it was thought necessary to create it. He did not think there would in time of emergency be any difficulty whatever. The difficulty was not that there was not plenty of patriotism in the country but to keep up the interest in the Reserve Forces in times of peace. There was, he was glad to say, a tendency in the Army in these day for the men to become skilled men and for the Army to become a learned profession, and there should be no force in which a man should be better trained than in the Yeomanry. He was quite sure that officers would agree that the time they had spent at Aldershot in learning their profession in the cavalry school was very well spent. The tendency of the Army to become a learned profession was growing year by year, and therefore, it was important to connect the education of the country with the Army and to devise some scheme so that not only the officers but every man who joined the force would feel that he was not cut off from the trade that he had previously followed. He believed the time would come when every barrack would be connected with a polytechnic so that the men might continue in their spare hours the practice of the trade to which they belonged. He thought that that would be the best way of increasing the popularity of the Army. He was sure that no one would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman on the subject of education without getting a warm response. In addition to the increased popularity which would be gained for the Army by offering these men the opportunity in their spare time of fitting themselves to continue their civil employment when they left the Service, they would not be lost for want of work, but would be capable of returning with increased skill to that which they had previously practised. He hoped that the time would come when by means of polytechnics every officer and private in the Army would have the opportunity of taking up some branch of education which would be of advantage to him in after life. The old fashioned idea of the Army being a nice profession for rich men pleasantly to occupy their attention with for a few years was fast disappearing. He hoped they would soon see it much more a profession than at the present time, a profession which would afford far greater opportunities for the men engaged in it.

*MR. GIBBS (Bristol, W.) thought that the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division had been rather hard on hon. Members on that side of the House, for what they had said was, not that Volunteers could never compete with Regular troops, but that they could never compete on the same terms. He certainly agreed with his hon. and gallant friend as to the excellent work done by the Canadian forces in the late South African war. No praise was too high for them, but still he did not believe that any Volunteer force, Home or Colonial, could compete, taking one country with another, With Regular forces. Every one recognised the great work which had been put into the scheme by the right hon. Gentleman. Although the scheme had not so much to do with the Army as with the voluntary forces he regretted that there was to be a further reduction in the Regular forces. Any further reduction would be a mistake when our Imperial interests were considered. They all desired peace, and those who had seen anything of active service were the first to wish that war would cease to exist. In men of British blood there was a hatred of anything approaching compulsion, and for that reason the people of this country would never submit to conscription. But if we were not to have conscription, all men must be willing to join the voluntary forces, and serve their country in that way, and thus preserve the peace of the world. If the voluntary system was going to take the place of conscription all classes must unite and do their best to make that system a success. The House was delighted to hear, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman had had assurances from some employers that they would heartily co-operate with him by getting their men to volunteer, and by allowing them to go into camp. It was to be hoped that all employers would follow so excellent an example. The right hon. Gentleman's proposals with regard to the Militia were certainly drastic and would result in the disappearance of the Militia. The Militia had done good work in the past and had a glorious history, and the present battalions were a great credit to the national Army. He would have thought, therefore, that every device would have been resorted to before the right hon. Gentleman brought in a scheme which did not remedy the unsatisfactory condition that the Militia battalions were now in, but extinguished the force altogether. As a member of the Yeomanry force, he regretted to see the reduction which had been made in the pay. Many of the Yeomanry, particularly those recruited in the towns, had, when they were engaged in business, very often to find and pay a substitute to take their place while they were out at their annual training. Up to the present the pay had been sufficient to enable them to do that, but the 1s. 2d. a day it was now proposed to give would not be sufficient to pay a substitute, and a man would have to supplement it considerably from his own pocket in order to go out for his annual training. He thought if that and the other changes foreshadowed were made they would not get the same class of men as joined at present, and the authorities would have to spend a much larger amount in teaching them to ride, because a man who could not hold his rifle when mounted was of no use as a mounted soldier. Too much stress could not be laid upon that. He agreed that £5 was too large an allowance to make for a horse, and in his opinion that allowance should not be made to the men at all. He thought it would be better to allow the colonel a sufficient sum with which to provide horses for the regiment, both where the men owned their horses and where horses had to be provided. If that were done it would enable the colonel to see that a good stamp of horse was obtained. He did not agree with much that had been said of the class of adjutants that should be provided for the Yeomanry. The drawing of adjutants from some other source would release sixty officers to go back to the cavalry, which would be an excellent thing, having regard to the paucity of officers in that arm of the service. He suggested that the right hon. Gentleman should obtain adjutants from the ranks of those who up to a few years ago were cavalry officers. Many of the retired cavalry officers who had settled down in the country would be only too willing to take up the duties of adjutant and go out for a nine months course of instruction. Such an arrangement would get rid of the objection raised as to the civilian element, because in such a case they would have men who had had five or six years service in a cavalry regiment; men who knew how a regiment should be carried on, and who would only have to rub up their knowledge of cavalry drill. In conclusion, he would only say, as a Yeomanry officer, if the scheme became law he would do his best to make it a success.

Lord J. JOICEY-CECIL (Lincolnshire, Stamford) said that with the exception of that of his hon. friend below him, the criticisms upon the Bill had resolved themselves into a duel between Yeomanry and Volunteer officers, who vied one with another in their prayers to the right hon. Gentleman to leave them alone. He did not quite understand what was to be the position of the Militia in the future. Up to now they had been short of officers and men, but that was partly due to the 12,000 a year recruited from their number for the Army. They had now only the men who had been with them for a great many years. The right hon. Gentleman was going to make third battalions, and he supposed that when the Bill passed, the Militia battalions would be asked to send their young men into the third battalions. The old men would be kept in the Militia battalions, and they would not be allowed to recruit. Of course as the old men died off, the Militia battalions would become weaker and eventually disappear altogether. Then the whole defence of the country was to be left to Volunteers. He had never been in a Volunteer corps, but he had had to do with them once or twice. They had very little idea of discipline, whereas the Militia, though they might be few in numbers, were, there could be no doubt about it, a disciplined force. He felt it very hard that that old force should be swept away, simply because the Volunteers happened at the present time to be a more popular force, and more able to get recruits. In his opinion, if they were to fall back upon the second line as a reinforcement, they must have men of some discipline, men who could do what they were told, and not do as they pleased, as was the case with the Volunteers now. As regarded the men passing from the third battalions to the line regiments, he took it that they would never see the battalion on parade before they joined it to go on active service. If they took the young men they got from the Militia and put them for six months drill in the Reserve, they would then be called up, though they had never seen the battalion on parade, never seen it manœuvre, and would be expected, when they joined, to be intelligent as any linesman who had served abroad. If those men were to be drafted to India, that would not be very encouraging [Mr. HALDANE: "No."] He was very glad to hear that was not to be the case, because young soldiers joining were all against going abroad, and their friends regarded India as a very terrible place. If that were clearly understood there would be a chance of getting more men. He understood that the third battalions, as soon as they became 500 strong, were to cease recruiting.

*MR. HALDANE: Six hundred would be the number, and that is to be kept up.

LORD JOICEY-CECIL said they would then recruit one man at a time, as they wanted him. Would the remainder of the men go to the Army or to the existing fragment of the Militia, because if the Militia were to exist at all it must be as a Militia battalion and not as a Volunteer battalion? Volunteers had their own particular ways, and he did not think it would be well that those who had served in the Militia and were used to discipline, should suddenly have to become Volunteers. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to give some encouragement to officers of the Militia who had done their best to maintain their position. As to the private soldier, he was very glad that the right hon. Gentleman had promised to consider the case of those men who would lose their bounty should his scheme come into force.

*MR. MADDISON (Burnley) said he was glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that the intention of his proposals was not to encourage the military spirit. In the course of the discussion it had been said that the scheme would lead to conscription or compulsory service. He would say at once, that if he thought for a moment that that would be its effect, much as he wanted to give hearty support to the Government, he would take the serious responsibility of opposing it at every stage. He did not believe that the scheme was intended to be, or was in essence, anything which would lead to compulsion, and therefore he was able to support it. He was rather sorry to hear his hon. friend the Member for the Richmond Division of Yorkshire say that if the scheme failed we might have conscription. But the merits of the scheme, and what he hoped were its chances of success, in themselves afforded a means to prevent compulsory service. He did not believe there was anything in the national situation to justify any fear of conscription; nor did he believe that, if the scheme failed, there was nothing before them but that alternative. Many hon. Members opposite were quite candid in saying that they believed that nothing but a system of compulsion could possibly be effective for the defence of the country. From what little knowledge he had of the working classes, he would impress upon the right hon. Gentleman that he must not have at the back of his mind, however remotely, any idea of conscription or compulsory service in any of its forms. His right hon. friend would have a good deal of difficulty in inducing working people to take advantage of his scheme at all. There was a great and growing sentiment on the part of the working classes against militarism in all its forms. They were not against the defence of the country; they were ready to take part in it; but they shared to the full suspicion of anything which approximated to the German idea of compulsory military service. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman must not only be on a voluntary basis, but be surrounded by a voluntary atmosphere; they were to expect everything from voluntaryism and nothing from compulsion. So long as he made that clear, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would find that he had the support of himself and those of the Labour Members who thought with him. Anything which would make a Volunteer force more effective, and give a better return for the public money expended, would receive their support. But they should narrowly watch the scheme, and if they found a vestige not merely of compulsion, but of any idea which savoured of compulsory service, then they would do their best to oppose it.

LORD BALCARRES said that he had anxiety as to the success of the scheme from two points of view—first, as to the organisation for bringing the Territorial Force into being; and, secondly, as to the degree of Army efficiency which that force might be expected to attain. The lords-lieutenant, who had not been good enough to appoint magistrates, were now to be put at the head of the Territorial Army. He did not think the lord-lieutenant was the right person at all. There were a certain number of lords-lieutenant who acted in that capacity for more than one county. He knew one who was a Quaker, and he was sure that he would not readily become president of the nation in arms so far as his own county was concerned. In presenting such a great scheme of Army reform, he did not think the right hon. Gentleman ought to make the appeal he did to the good will of the great landlords of the country. He did not think the armed forces of the country ought to depend on the good will of the landlords or of anybody else. It was the duty of Parliament, if land was required for rifle ranges, to take compulsory powers to get that land. The associations about to be formed would be gigantic bodies. The right hon. Gentleman, in reply to a question, had informed him that there would be two or three sub-associations for a great county like Lancashire, and so far, so good. He thought there were many other counties in which one committee would not be adequate to deal with all the responsibilities which the right hon. Gentleman was going to place upon them. It seemed to be a fundamental part of the scheme that the county associations should manage the amalgamated Auxiliary Forces of the country, and that, in his opinion, was one of its chief objections. Many objections could be urged to the Yeomanry, the Militia, and the Volunteers in regard to their present organisation, but the difficulties would not be remedied in any way by amalgamation. It seemed to him that by the new scheme they were bound to destroy the Volunteers almost immediately, and almost inevitably they would at the same time destroy the Militia forces as already existing. He did not think that there was any jealousy between the Militia and the Volunteer forces, the reason being that they had never come into any kind of conflict. But none the less there was a radical distinction between the two, and there was a distinction even in the recruiting. The class of men from which the Militia were recruited was entirely different from that from which the Volunteers were drawn. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman, in his conferences with Volunteer officers, had been told that there were many parents who would allow their sons to join the Volunteers who would never dream of allowing them to go into the Militia force. That was freely admitted by everyone who had had anything to do with recruiting for the Volunteers. Under the new scheme the two forces would be amalgamated, and they would have the Militia and the Volunteers drilling side by side. That was to be the system for the home defence army except in regard to the battalions which would be kept for providing the drafts for the oversea army. The conditions in regard to the two forces were wholly different, and the War Office seemed systematically to ignore those differences. The Secretary of State for War had told them with pride that his was a soldier's scheme. He did not think there was very much in that to recommend it. He would much rather it had been a scheme based upon the Volunteer and Militia forces themselves, because those two forces had no reason whatever to be grateful to the soldier for their existence. The right hon. Gentleman had given a good illustration of how little he regarded the opinion of Volunteer officers in this matter. Last year the Secretary of State for War appointed a Committee of persons experienced in the Militia and Volunteers. That Committee had not met since last summer, and now they were told that it was never intended that that Committee should report. The right hon. Gentleman had made speeches of great eloquence on the subject, but he did not tell them when he appointed that Committee that they were not expected to report. He seemed to ignore the fact that the Volunteer regiments had their own military traditions. There were plenty of Volunteer battalions which had much older military traditions than some of the battalions in the Regular Army. The Volunteers had their own organisation and property, in fact they had both military and personal traditions, and these were valuable military assets which the right hon. Gentleman ought not to lightly destroy. One result of the new scheme must be to destroy such corps as the Inns of Court, the Post Office, and the Hon. Artillery. Those corps must vanish, although they happened to be amongst the most efficient regiments in the Volunteer system. It was not a scheme which could commend itself to the Volunteer forces, simply because it involved their total and prompt abolition. He would like to know what the effect of the scheme would be upon the property of existing Volunteer organisations. In connection with that the right hon. Gentleman had put a sum of £500,000 in the Estimates; but that did not represent a tithe of the money spent upon drill-halls, ranges, etc., and the War Office had no right, merely by paying off the last £500,000 owing upon those buildings, to receive property worth many millions. Under the territorial scheme the proposal to have a new class of adjutant, receiving £100 a year, seemed to him very dangerous. A Volunteer officer could not do the work of a Regular adjutant, who, not being a local man, was actuated by no local jealousies and was free from partiality. He hoped that part of the scheme would be reconsidered. A small but important point was the question of uniform. That had been only incidentally referred to by the right hon. Gentleman in reply to an interruption. From the point of view of recruiting and other things, it was a question which could not be lightly dismissed. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that one suit of clothes would be provided for each man. He did not understand that that service kit would apply to the Yeomanry at all. He did not think that one service kit would be sufficient for the purpose. In the first place, they had to be prepared for six months embodiment, and in order to be adequately prepared for that they would have to provide money, not merely to give further uniforms to the 300,000 men, but to provide for an adequate reserve as well. That in itself was quite enough to wreck the finance of the scheme. When the Financial Secretary to the War Office came to deal with the matter he hoped the hon. Gentleman would take the House a little more into his confidence in regard to the cost. The approximate estimate of £2,800,000 in round figures was interesting mostly for what it omitted to deal with. It only provided for one suit of clothes. There was nothing for guns, stores, engineers, army service, medical service, and non-effective service, nor was there any provision for special expenditure on guns, rifles, clothing, equipment, and capital outlays. There was no estimate for rifle clubs or cadet corps, no estimate for housing, and, so far as he could make out, there was no adequate sum for the charges incidental to manœuvring. There was no use telling the House that the Territorial Army would cost £2,800,000. That did not represent a fraction of the cost. Moreover he hoped the Financial Secretary would give rather more satisfactory assurances about Treasury control than could be gathered from the speech of the Secretary of State for War. So far as he could gather, the Treasury control over money would be practically nil. There might be a political reason underlying that, but he hoped the House would not allow the Treasury to lose its control over monies handed to local bodies. As to the six months embodiment, as soon as war was declared he thought the proposal under the new scheme would make men hesitate to join the Territorial Army. He would not go into the difficulty in connection with the question of wages. The difficulty of getting men to camp was not one which had arisen through the action of employers. It had arisen from other causes. He knew that employers were only too glad if they could send men to camp. It paid the employer to do so, and he was a foolish employer who hesitated to give facilities for his workmen to go into camp. He was rather shocked when he heard the Secretary of State announce that six months was not the minimum training for embodiment. He did not know whether it was worth while living in a fool's paradise, but he ventured to say that there was little expert military opinion of men who had seen great wars, that the ordinary British volunteer, who served for fourteen days each year for two, three, four, or five years, and then had six months embodiment, was competent and capable of meeting in the field the best European troops who could be brought against him. The proposal of the right hon. Gentleman that they should induce men to join the Territorial Army by offering them exemption from service on juries would not be of great value. He thought an appeal to their patriotism would be better than that extra inducement. The right hon. Gentleman had indicated that he expected the men would volunteer as units for service abroad. He was not himself a conscriptionist, but he did not like pressure to be put on the Volunteers or the Militia either as regiments or units to serve abroad. Their terms of enlistment stated that they should only be expected to serve in defence of our own shores. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman, coupled no doubt with public opinion, would put almost irresistible pressure, not only on individual men, but on individual corps to take up service abroad. He thought that was unfair, and wholly against the principle under which these people were recruited. The result would be that they would keep out a certain class of recruits—married artisans for instance—and from that point of view they would lose one of the assets on which at the present moment they most freely relied in connection with the Volunteer regiments. Having listened to the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman this year and last, he confessed that he was rather puzzled as to what the fundamental principle of his scheme was. The hon. Member for Burnley had said that he was not going to support anything in the nature of conscription. The right hon. Gentleman said he was going to reduce the number of men required, and increase the efficiency. Last year it was 100 per cent., and this year it was 80 per cent. He wished even the more modest estimate of the Secretary of State were true, but he did not see any certainty of success. If the scheme failed, there could be no alternative but conscription in one form or another. There would be nothing to fall back upon when the old organisation had been smashed up. The right hon. Gentleman said his scheme was a bulwark against conscription. It seemed to him that the obligation of three months' notice and the £5 fine had about it the element of compulsion. The right hon. Gentleman said that his object was to relieve the anxiety of the country. He himself was not at all certain that the anxiety of the country ought to be relieved. He thought the country ought to be a great deal more anxious than it was on these points. What we wanted was a good fighting force of soldiers, and not a speculative force. Three or four times the right hon. Gentleman had told them that this was a speculation, that it could not come into full operation during this or the next Parliament, and that successive Ministries would be required to see it properly carried out. If that was the view of the right hon Gentleman, surely it would have been wiser policy to have abstained from striking off some of the best units at the beginning of the scheme, and to have waited until he had matured his plans. Having abolished those Regular troops, the right hon. Gentleman came and told the House that his scheme was little more than a speculation. He would look forward with great interest to a close examination of the measure introduced by the right hon. Gentleman when printed; but after listening to his speeches he regarded the embarking upon this re-organisation scheme with the gravest anxiety and apprehension.

MR. GUEST (Cardiff District) said that the noble lord had endeavoured to plunge the House into an atmosphere of considerable gloom, but he did not know that the attitude which the noble Member had taken up represented the general opinion of the House. He thought that it was the general feeling that the Secretary for War was to be congratulated upon having introduced in this measure a conception which might go a long way to solve many of the difficulties which had presented themselves to Army reformers in the past ten years. The hon. Member for Chorley had drawn attention to the fact that the Volunteers and Militia were recruited from different classes, and had said that although many parents would have no objection to allow their sons to join the Volunteers they would yet object to their enlisting in the Militia. But the hon. Member had overlooked the fact that the class of men who now joined the Militia would be incorporated in the third battalions, young fellows who were known as "corner boys," and who joined the Militia with a view of afterwards going into the Regular Army. The objection of the hon. Member therefore did not apply to the greater part of the Territorial Army. The hon. Member's other argument was that the Auxiliary Forces would be unable to face the best European troops, but it never was contemplated to pit our Auxiliary Forces against the picked battalions of, say, the German Army. The hon. Member must know that there were many duties in war, such as keeping open the lines of communication and garrisoning depots in India and the Colonies which could be efficiently carried out by auxiliary troops, freeing Regulars to go into the fighting line. After all, there was surely something in the fact that such an auxiliary force as was contemplated must be some deterrent to a Foreign Power who contemplated invasion of this country. He agreed with the hon. Member that the estimates which had been presented as to the probable cost of the force hardly represented what the cost would be if the force was to be effective. He was much impressed by the right hon. Member's appeal to the nation, and especially to the patriotism of country gentleman—though these were not more patriotic than other classes of the community—but at the same time he thought there was some truth in the suggestion that the War Secretary was trying to get his Territorial Army rather on the cheap. That was clear, because the third battalions, which were the chief innovation introduced by the right hon. Gentleman, would not really belong to the second line, but to the first line. They were to form training schools, and their main duties belonged to the first line. The 370,000 men which at present constituted the Auxiliary Forces would thereby be reduced by the right hon. Gentleman's scheme to 313,000, so that it seemed that the whole gain accruing to the Regular Army would be at the expense of the Auxiliary Forces. The Territorial Army would suffer both in men and money. It was doubtful whether the right hon. Gentleman was not over sanguine in appealing to the patriotism of the country with a closed fist as regarded money. In regard to the Yeomanry force, he very much doubted whether the reduction in their pay would not act injuriously upon it. Mr. Brodrick first became alive to the possibilities of the Yeomanry force, on whom the late Government put their money, with the result that they doubled its strength, and more than doubled its efficiency. There were, after all, only two ways of raising a Territorial Army in this country—by compulsion and by inducement. He did not mean to argue for compulsion, but he would point out the danger of its being necessary to resort to it if inducement failed. The right hon. Gentleman certainly expected to get his Territorial Army very inexpensively, the estimated cost per man of infantry being £6, and of cavalry £14, as against £21 which the Yeomanry cost at the present time. He welcomed the creation of the Territorial Army, but he maintained that it would be necessary to spend more money upon it. If that was to be done consistently with that economy to which most Members on that side of the House were pledged, it could be only obtained by effecting economies on the Regular Army. The discussions had proved conclusively that no economy on the Regular Army could be permanent which did not involve a reduction of the number of men who served with the colours. He gave the right hon. Gentleman the credit for economies effected by more careful organisation, but that was a minor matter. The question whether they were able to make a reduction in the numbers of the Regular Army must be answered by the consideration of the military problem which presented itself in regard to the frontier of India. He had never heard any Secretary for War or any member of the Defence Committee state what were the military requirements which general considerations necessitated in the event of a war on the frontier of India; but he would point out that under the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman they were in a much better position to judge as to the defence of India than they had been in recent years. By the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman we should not only have at first an expeditionary force of 160,000, but after six months a force of 260,000, to which were to be added the Indian and Colonial garrisons; making a total force of some 378,000 Regular troops, which could be put on the Indian frontier in the course of one year. That, of course, did not include the native army, which was 387,000 men. That was a very large number of men, and he supposed it was possible that a somewhat smaller force than that would suffice to meet our requirements for one year. If we were able to put on the Indian frontier 350,000 men, he did not think anybody could say that the force was insufficient for its defence. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider the points raised in regard to the expenditure on county associations, because he believed that, with all the goodwill in the world—and he thought there would be goodwill in regard to these county associations, and that even hon. Members who had criticised the scheme would be the first to lend themselves to forwarding the object in view—the scheme would fail unless a larger sum of money was devoted to it. He believed there was a great deal of good in the scheme which the Secretary of State had outlined. It would appeal to the country and to the emulation among counties which was, after all, an asset of our national life. He thought the scheme had a prospect of being a success, and he was not himself influenced by any of the gloomy apprehensions which disturbed the hon. Member for Chorley. But if the Minister for War was not able to devote more than £2,800,000 to the scheme it was almost certain to fail. Seeing that the right hon. Gentleman had so largely decreased the Regular Army, he asked him to see whether he could not devote a larger sum for the perfection of the scheme he had outlined.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT wished he could share the hon. Member's opinion with regard to the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. No doubt it was the result of very great thought and careful labour, but he doubted whether it would bear investigation when the Bill came to be printed. He was a member of the Esher Committee, and he thought it was absolutely necessary to point out that this scheme had never been brought before that Committee in its entirety, and it had not been mentioned to them, except in very general outline, that there was a desire on the part of the Secretary of State which everybody thought was extremely laudable, to promote county feeling with regard to the Army and the development of the defence forces of the nation. These proposals were not consistent with his recollection of what passed in the Committee. He could not understand why, after the Secretary of State had chosen a Committee from all parts of the country as well as from the Auxiliary and Regular forces, he did not bring his scheme before them and obtain their advice upon it, before laying it before Parliament. It would have been advantageous to the right hon. Gentleman to have done so, because he would then have introduced a scheme with the approval of those who knew what they were talking about. Of course it was very difficult to criticise a Bill which they had not read, especially as the right hon. Gentleman said it would be of considerable length—in fact a handbook of the law on the subject. But there were one or two matters to which he would like to make allusion. He admitted that the proposal for the transfer of the debts of the Volunteer Corps from the National Debt Commissioners to the War Office was in many quarters viewed favourably. In other quarters, however, it was viewed with considerable apprehension. That was by corps who had been able to pay their way and had taken care that their liabilities should be on the basis of their ability to meet them. There were many corps who owed a very small portion of the mortgage money, and it would be exceedingly unfair if any policy was resorted to by the War Office to compel them to transfer the small remaining liability which existed and thereby part with their vested right in the freehold or leasehold interest in the drill halls which they had erected. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman had said that this transfer was to be perfectly optional on the part of the Volunteer corps, and it was open to them to choose whether they adopted the provision or not. [Mr. BUCHANAN assented.] He was glad to see that the Financial Secretary to the War Office assented to that and to know that it would be carried into practice. Another matter to which he wished to call attention was the question of adjutants. He was connected with the Volunteer force after leaving the Army when the old system of adjutants was in force. Some retired officer of the Army was appointed adjutant for life, and he often held the position long beyond the period at which he was an efficient officer. In about 1875 a new system was adopted and officers with the rank of captain were invited to volunteer from the Regular battalions—the territorial battalions—for five years service as adjutant, with either a Militia, a Volunteer, or a Yeomanry battalion. The officer was only appointed with the approval of his commanding officer and, as a rule, of the comanding officer of the Volunteers, Yeomanry, or Militia, as the case might be. The Volunteer force had derived immense benefit from the adjutants so appointed, as a whole, although, of course, there had been exceptions, but as a rule the adjutants from the Regular Army had rendered very great service to the Auxiliary Forces. As a rule they were keen young men who knew that the way in which they discharged their duties would be favourably reported upon, and he knew of cases in which these officers had been promoted to high rank in consequence of the way in which they had discharged their duties. He regretted to hear the right hon. Gentleman speak with some disparagement of the services rendered by adjutants to commanding officers. There might, of course, be some regiments in which the adjutants had run the regiment, but as a whole he maintained that their services had been great as well as discreetly rendered. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that the adjutants did not perform purely military duty, but the regulations prohibited the adjutant from taking part in the civil affairs of the force. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to withdraw that most valuable link between the Regular Army and the Territorial force. Such a step would be the greatest disaster that could possibly happen to the force, and he entreated the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider his decision. He had also spoken disparagingly of Volunteer commanding officers for remitting fines, suggesting at the same time that such punishments would be maintained by the county associations. Long experience had convinced him that the most popular commanding officers were those who preserved the best discipline, and any desire shown by a commanding officer to remit fines justly levied would meet with the extreme disapprobation of the batallion and eventually lead to its being broken up. Then compulsory camp duty every year was a question of very great difficulty. The predecessors of the right hon. Gentleman had attempted to carry out a similar policy, but the provision had to be withdrawn owing to its unfairness and the detrimental effect it had upon Volunteer recruiting. By the right hon. Gentleman's ill-considered scheme a great unsettlement had already been produced among the Volunteers. The present was the best recruiting time for the force. In the battalion he was connected with sometimes as many as twenty men presented themselves on a Monday night for medical inspection, with a view to joining. Those men were not there tonight. Why? Because the Secretary of State had unsettled them by his scheme. They were no longer to be enrolled; they were to be enlisted men for four years. They were not to leave at less than three months notice, and the notice was not to be given to their commanding officer but to some county committee. In addition to that a man was to be fined up to £5 if he left before. He would know how much he was to be fined. He could go to his commanding officer and say, "Under what conditions can I leave immediately, as I am offered employment in Canada, or elsewhere." And in addition to that he was to be under the other onerous conditions set out by the right hon. Gentleman. How could they expect a father to permit his son to join the Volunteers under such circumstances when the boy had to earn his living, and when it might be necessary and essential for him to take up a berth, at a moment's notice, in another part of the country? Then, as regarded the officers, he did not hesitate to say that some of the best officers of the Volunteers came from the legal profession. But how was a young lawyer to undertake beforehand to say, the moment the first class of the Army Reserve was mobilised, that he was ready to throw his profession to the winds and go out for six months? It was absolutely impossible. The question of officers was a most serious matter. There was a deficit of 3,000 officers in the Volunteer force, and a deficit of 10,000 as regarded the Army as a whole. He warned the right hon. Gentleman that any difficulty put in the way of a man taking up a commission in the Volunteer force meant disaster to that force. The abolition of the liability to serve on juries had been advocated as an inducement for men to join the forces, but he did not think that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to obtain that concession without great difficulty. When he (Sir H. Vincent) moved in that matter before Lord Halsbury the then Lord Chancellor would not listen to any such suggestion, but declared he would never consent to some of the most intelligent of the community being absolved from jury duty. Those were the very persons that were required on juries. He was grateful to the Secretary of State for War as the first Liberal Minister who had frankly recognised the necessity of a Territorial Army, and he would willingly help him; but why did the right hon. Gentleman propose to abolish the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteers on a mere speculation? It would have been possible to frame some scheme which would have utilised existing materials, improved them, and incorporated them more with the Regular Army. Instead the Secretary for War had chosen to abolish those materials on a mere speculation as to whether he would get the men for his new Territorial Army. He feared the right hon. Gentleman would have great difficulty in getting the necessary men; he wished it were not so. As regarded brigade and divisional organisation, he was heartily with the right hon. Gentleman, but he hoped he would not remove the adjutants who had rendered such splendid service, and appoint in their stead fourteen superannuated major-generals.

*SIR W. EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said the right hon. Gentleman had himself referred to hs scheme as a speculation or a gamble. They had heard of gambling with the food of the people, but this scheme presented itself to him as gambling with the safety of the nation. The debate had disclosed one important thing, namely, that this was a political and not a military gamble in any sense of the word.

The right hon. Member for the Newport Division, had elicited the fact that the military advisers of the Government were not responsible for the reduction of the regular troops of the Army. Here was a very important part of the scheme with which the experts disagreed, and he thought the House and the country should take very grave note of the fact. He would like to point out the deplorable position which His Majesty's Government military advisers occupied upon these occasions. Great schemes such as that which the right hon. Gentleman had brought forward were foisted upon the War Office. The public and the House should know precisely how far the military advisers of the Crown were responsible for them. He remembered that when the six army corps scheme was brought forward, they were told that it had the undivided support of the military advisers of the War Office. But when the Royal Commission on the War assembled and these gentlemen were free to state their real opinion, they found that these very gentlemen had from the very first considered the scheme as utterly unsuitable to the military requirements of the country. If there were a Royal Commission now, and these distinguished soldiers were free to speak out, he wondered whether they would be found to agree with the scheme brought forward by the Secretary of State? He did not believe that soldiers as soldiers would endorse the scheme. It seeemd to him that the whole structure of the Army Council, the General Staff, and the Defence Committee so carefully set up was in practice nothing but a solemn farce. They had apparently to register the opinions of the political advisers of the Crown. Their voice as military experts was never heard in the country at all. But they had to take the responsibility of these schemes, and he thought it most deplorable that they should have no real opportunity of telling the country what their opinion was, or of throwing the onus of accepting the schemes upon the House of Commons, and removing it from their own shoulders. The Secretary of State went to them and said: "It is the policy of the country to reduce the Regular Army by so many thousands, with that proviso you must make the best arrangements you can." The officers were never in a position to say to the country that they objected to a reduction of that kind. He for one was glad to know that the admission had at all events been made by the right hon. Gentleman, that the reduction of the regular troops was carried out in face of the protest of the military advisers of the Crown. ["No."] If that was not so, let the right hon. Gentleman correct him. Of course it had been provided by the Esher Commission that if the Army Council objected to any of these schemes they could resign. But resignation was an illusion; those gentlemen could not resign; they had to make their career in the Army, and resignation meant financial ruin to them. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman appeared to him to be entirely based upon "ifs," hypotheses, and hopes. Seventy-four battalions were to be created behind the seventy-two pairs which already existed. If they got the right men they might be of some service, but it all depended upon that. As to the county associations if they were formed if it was found that they were equal to the performance of the important duties which were placed upon them, then the scheme might go through, but it all depended upon that important "if." As to the Yeomanry, if they would consent to serve under the new conditions that part of the scheme might be successful. But he would point out that only recently the Yeomanry had consented to serve on the terms that they were at present serving under, and they had enormously improved since they had responded to the call. Yet no sooner were they settled down to those terms and become a really effective force, than the whole scheme was upset again, and they were told that they would have to serve under different terms altogether and on different pay. It was all a pure gamble and speculation, as the right hon. Gentleman himself had called it, and he could only hope that it would not turn out disastrously for both the right hon. Gentleman and the country. They were told that the whole idea was based on the great principle of preparedness for war, but how would this great scheme work when put to that test? When the Army was mobilised in 1899 it was found,

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according to Sir Evelyn Wood, that 35 to 40 per cent. of the striking forces were inefficient and unfit to proceed to the front. In what respect was that great evil remedied by the right hon. Gentleman? He could see in the striking force now proposed no prospect of any change in those conditions. The Reserves would have to be called out at once to join the colours whenever the new Army was mobilised. The seventy-four battalions which were to be created would be called up and trained for six months, and then they were to go into the ranks of the Regular Army. This period of six months had evidently been fixed without any reference to the enemy. The two contingencies we had to deal with were a raid or a great war, on the Indian frontier, for example. In the case of a raid, did the right hon. Gentleman suppose that it was going to be conducted on the principle of six months notice? In the event of a great frontier campaign one big action in modern war might require us to replace 30,000 men at once, and the seventy-four battalions were to be the reservoir from which the drafts were to be obtained. Those battalions were to train "the substance" of what was in the Militia before. But the right hon. Gentleman was not in the least certain of getting the substance. Ultimately they were to contain from 500 to 600 men, liable—he did not say fit—to come up on mobilisation to go abroad, and they were to serve as a reservoir to supply drafts for the Regular battalions. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to get from those young men at seventeen years of age with only fifteen days training, 12,000 trained men, and those young untrained men were to form the Reserve to be drafted into the fighting line to make good the wastage of a great campaign. He did not believe that any competent military opinion would be found ready to endorse such a scheme. The battalions were never to go abroad as units, but they were to form mobilisation centres, and the Regulars were to recruit there. That system would only repeat the evils they had already experienced in regard to the Militia, namely, that the battalions would drain off all their best men for the Regular Army, and the residue would be left as a perfectly useless portion of that force. The hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division had told them that those untrained men were as good as the finest trained troops of any European power.

MAJOR SEELY: I never said anything of the sort.

*SIR W. EVANS GORDON said his recollection was that the hon. and gallant Member had said that in the most emphatic way. He had also said that they on the Opposition Benches believed seven years was the least period in which a really good and efficient soldier could be made, but that opinion had never been shared by him. The view on that point which had been expressed by his hon. and gallant friend was not supported by any military authority in the world. It was never true and was less true now than ever. It was a principle which did not apply to any profession or calling. They did not expect an untrained lawyer to be as good as a trained lawyer, nor an untrained carpenter to be as good as a trained carpenter. It was impossible to train men for war in the time suggested by hon. Members opposite. They might as well take a county council school football team and pit them against the trained team from New Zealand. Such troops would inevitably be swept away by trained troops, however gallant they might be. He was confident that they would do their best, but they would be hopelessly handicapped, and every military opinion in this or any other country was absolutely opposed to the view expressed by the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division. There was no man in the House of Commons to whom the words "honourable and gallant" applied so appropriately as they did to the hon. and gallant Member, but he possessed another quality. He had an enormous, almost a sublime, confidence in himself, and no doubt he would be willing to take anybody on at any game they liked to mention. He would cheerfully tackle Mr. Hackenschmidt at wrestling, Mr. Stevenson at billiards, or the Under-Secretary for the Colonies in debate, and he would feel confident that he was going to succeed, but whether he would succeed or not was quite another matter. The Secretary of State the other day made the remarkable statement that our preparations for war should slumber in time of peace. That was a strange statement to come from a War Minister. He advertised to the world that we required six months to train the men in order to fit them for any campaign. When the six months were over, how many of those men would really be able, however willing, to join the fighting force? The right hon. Gentleman said at one moment that the Territorial Army was for the defence of these shores, and at another that it was to be a reservoir to recruit and reinforce the fighting force abroad. The right hon. Gentleman went further, and said that he hoped and believed that the men would not only go as individuals, but as regiments, and even as brigades. Had the right hon. Gentleman really gone into the facts? What material was this territorial Army to come from? They would to a large extent be the present Volunteers under another name. He maintained that although they might be willing, a vast proportion were absolutely unable to serve the country abroad for the simple reason that they were men with families and dependants. They would throw their wives and children into starvation if they were to take part in a long campaign. Therefore of the 300,000 Volunteers a large proportion could never leave their homes to engage in a foreign war, and those who did go would be half-trained men under half-trained officers. The right hon. Gentleman was incurring a grave responsibility in asking the country to believe that, out of the heterogeneous forces which he proposed to collect, it would possess an Army seriously able to help us in a great national emergency.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will be the first person to agree with me that when a Minister brings in a long and complicated measure it is usual for him to say a few words at the end of the debate on the First Reading. If he did not, what would ensue would be that the Bill would be circulated in a day or two, and the first impression on reading the Bill after listening to the speech of the Secretary of State for War might be, as those familiar with Parliamentary procedure were aware, that the language of the draughtsman was very different from the language of the lucid exponent we have in the right hon. Gentleman. Therefore, I only rise for the purpose of inviting the right hon. Gentleman to make a few remarks before the debate closes. I venture to think that he will feel it his duty to give to the House his views in regard to one or two of the broad features which seem to emerge out of the debate to which we have listened. What is the bald, plain object of this Bill? I am not going to roam over the whole field of the exigencies of the Empire. The object of the Bill is to change what are called the Auxiliary Forces into something else—to modify them drastically as to terms of service, pay, and organisation. The first thing that strikes me in the scheme is the astonishing coincidence between the number of real effectives we now have in the Auxiliary Forces and the number of men whom the right hon. Gentleman hopes to get by his scheme. A still more astonishing coincidence is that between the cost of the present Auxiliary Forces and the estimated cost of the new Territorial Army. The present Militia, Militia Reserve, Yeomanry and Volunteers number 380,000 men and cost £4,250,000. The right hon. Gentleman altered everything in relation to these forces, and after speculative investigation announced that the alterations would give us again 380,000 men at a cost of £4,250,000. I was so struck by this that I asked the late Solicitor-General, if he were engaged in a law case instead of in the present debate, what course he would pursue, and my learned friend said that the first question he would put to the actuary whom he would put in the witness box would be how he regarded this extraordinary coincidence that the alterations would give us again the exact number of men at a cost exactly the same to a penny; and his learned friend said that the actuary would be bound to say he believed that the odds against the extraordinary coincidence were a million to one. I think the right hon. Gentleman must give the House some explanation of this most astonishing coincidence. The Bill has been commended upon the ground that it proceeds in the direction of diminishing the Regular Army, and exalting the numbers and the importance of the Territorial Army. What it does is to transfer 80,000 men out of the Militia into the Regular Army. That is the first important change effected in the Auxiliary Forces of the country, and when it has been effected the remanet is in future to be administered and commanded—two different things—under an organisation which seems to me to be somewhat intricate. These 300,000 men are going to be administered by county associations. I am not going to dwell on those who are to form these county associations; but take an imaginary county. There will be the Lord-Lieutenant who is a Peer, and perhaps has been in the Army, and who has to put down £500, or perhaps £1,000 as a subscription. Then his colleagues would probably be members of this House, ex-officers of the Army, busy people of the county counci —men who are already taxed in time and purse, and who are to be asked to take a further tax on their time and purse. I hope they will take it. But I will say this with a word of regret, that if the right hon. Gentleman could have pursued what I believe was his first intention, and carried on the name and traditions of the Militia, these men would have been more willing to take it than they will be when both name and traditions disappear under this scheme. In the last resort over the administrative side of this problem, including, as I understand in some cases, the provision of rations and forage for men and horses, the commander-in-chief is to be the civilian member of the Army Council. I should be the last person in the world to speak disrespectfully of any member of the Army Council, but, in all seriousness, is Lord Portsmouth to be the Carnot of the British National Army and the organiser of victory? However distinguished a Member of the Upper House the present civilian Member of the Army Council may be, the high officers will not accept the *ipse dixit* of any politician occupying that post as the last word upon the important financial and military obligations that are being placed upon them. Now, let me take the disciplinary side of the matter. As I understand it, the altered Auxiliary Forces are to be under the command of a Divisional General. Let us take an imaginary county. Blankshire now has a general commanding all the troops, Regulars and Auxiliaries, in the district. It has also an administerial general, commanding the Regulars, and does the right hon. Gentleman mean to tell us that we are to have fourteen more divisional generals superimposed upon the same district? I am afraid that the unfortunate Auxiliary officer would have a troubled life under the reign of an administrative Regular, a tactical Regular, an Auxiliary General and an administrative county association. I want to say a word on the Special Contingent. Why are the territorial troops going to join, and where are they going to be trained? Some have joined in the past because they felt their body of Militia to be a county regiment; and I think the right hon. Gentleman has missed his chance by not following that county tradition, which was a growing one, and the newly-acquired glory gained in the South African War. There is now less reason for the men to join. They will go into the depots, which are not so good and attractive as they were; in fact some of them have been condemned, and there they are to be trained. The right hon. Gentleman counts upon 500 or 600 in each year, but in these house-room can only be found for 100 or 120 men at a time, therefore they have got to be trained all the year round. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that there had been some satisfactory experiments in winter training, but that was with fixed battalions, and if they have to be trained through the winter months, what becomes of the claims of the soldiers for progressive training—first company drill, then battalion drill, then manœuvres? Then how are the men to be trained for musketry if that is to mean anything at all? If the Special Contingent is taken off the Auxiliary Forces and added to the Regulars, there will not be sufficient opportunities for effective training. Supposing the right hon. Gentleman cannot satisfy us with respect to the Auxiliary Forces, then we must look with greater interest towards the Regular Forces, and I must again press the right hon. Gentleman to say how the Reserve from the Regular battalions will stand. The right hon. Gentleman said actuarial calculations showed that the Reserve stands at 130,000 and will decline and stop at the normal figure of 115,000. I am not questioning the right hon. Gentleman's good faith, but I have my suspicions of actuaries, and I may point out that with all the engines and methods for building up a Reserve in the past ten years the Reserve now stands at 113,000 which is 2,000 below the establishment. Now that the right hon. Gentleman has discarded that machinery and substituted seven years for three years, how is he going to get those 2,000 additional men ?

*MR. HALDANE : The right hon. Gentleman has entered in the last stage of his speech upon a most dangerous and controversial topic—actuarial calculations. I will give some reasons why I think the right hon. Gentleman's doubts are ill-founded. In the first place, he spoke of the battalions and the number of men who had enlisted and passed into the Reserve seven years ago. But how long had the numbers which he had then been in existence ? There was battalion after battalion added at the beginning of the South African war, and many of those battalions had not time to pass into the Reserve. That was why his Reserve was low. The right hon. Gentleman has omitted to take into account that we have troops abroad as well as at home. Taking the troops serving with the Colours both at home and abroad as between 200,000 and 300,000, the numbers of the Reserve must be somewhere where I myself have placed it. If there are 240,000 men with the Colours, and they serve seven years with the Colours and then five years in the Reserve, the numbers in the Reserve must stand as five stood to seven. Therefore, when I put the Reserve at 115,000 there ought to be a good margin on my side. A plain person of common sense whose mind has not been debauched by actuarial calculations will be able to see that. My figures have been furnished and are certified by the first authorities at the War Office. Then the right hon. Gentleman complains of the civil member of the Council taking charge of the affairs of the second line. The right hon. Gentleman was at one time Under-Secretary at the War Office, and if this reorganisation had taken place in his time the right hon. Gentleman himself would have been the civil member. The right hon. Gentleman is marked out as the ideal man for that position. If the right hon. Gentleman does not realise that, it is to be hoped the country will realise it, so that his services shall not be lost. Then the right hon. Gentleman spoke of the commanding officers of the territorial regiments. He said the lord-lieutenant of the county was a person who was too busy. In this scheme we are not looking to the lord-lieutenant. The commanders of different arms are incorporated in a committee which manages these things, and there will be at least a hope that they will have sitting with them a representative of the Regular general. It is the very people who do the business who will conduct the administrative side. As to their being too busy, it is their very particular affairs they would be looking after, and they will have professional assistance. I hope also the chairman will be a competent man of business. The other point of the right hon. Gentleman is the question of coincidences between the cost and the numbers. I can only tell him that as regards the cost, I gave it to the Financial Department of the War Office to work out the cost of keeping in being a force of this kind—the second line force. It was estimated on the not very niggardly scale of £2,800,000, which is a sum largely in excess of what a much larer army costs in Switzerland. The £1,500,000 that remains is more than sufficient to provide the Special Contingent element. With regard to numbers, again there is no mystery about them. I do not quite recognise the coincidence.

MR. WYNDHAM : If the right hon. Gentleman adds Militia reserve, Yeomanry, and Volunteer reserve together, he will find that the total comes to 374,000 or 376,000. That is very nearly 380,000, an approximation that must, I am afraid, have rather dazzled the actuary.

*MR. HALDANE: The argument of the right hon. Member would have been admirable if he had not taken the establishment for one purpose and the strength for the other.

MR. WYNDHAM: That is exactly what the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War has done. I have taken the effectives, but the right hon. Gentleman called it establishment when he took his estimate. I cannot take the right hon. Gentleman's estimates until I know whether he will get them.

*MR. HALDANE: I was comparing establishment with establishment, and strength with strength; I did not jump from strength to establishment and from establishment back to strength. If there is a coincidence there is a good reason for it. This has been a remarkably interesting discussion, but I think it will be convenient for the House to discuss the Bill further when it is in print. I shall be glad, therefore, if the House will give me now the First Reading.

*MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) who was received with cries of "Divide, Divide," said the Motion to suspend the 11 o'clock rule had not come from the benches on which he sat, therefore he ventured to suggest to hon. Members and right hon. Members opposite from whose side it did come, that it was scarcely seemly that at six minutes past eleven they should propose that the debate should cease.

MR. CLOUGH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

*MR. CARLILE said no hostile criticism would come from him or his friends after the deeply interesting statement of the right hon. Gentleman, but nevertheless there were points which they might suggest to the right hon. Gentleman even at this stage. The Secretary of State had stated that the object of the Bill was decentralisation, but so far as the Auxiliary Forces were concerned it was very far from carrying out any such intention. In regard to the Volunteers the commanding officers of battalions had the disposal of certain payments, they provided training, drill halls, equipment and other things out of an amount of £3 16s. 6d. per man. The balance of the £7 Capitation Grant, £3 3s. 6d. was spent on permanent staff. Under the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman they would have, instead of decentralisation, the whole matter centralised in the county associations. Such a thing would be disastrous to the Volunteer service which the right hon. Gentleman desired to benefit. At the present time the Militia cost £22 a head and had twenty-eight days training. The Volunteers cost £7 per head and did from eight to fifteen days' training. He ventured to say that under the county associations administration was not likely to be so economical as under the commanding officer, who was responsible for the funds and was most interested in the efficiency of the battalion. He noticed that the right hon. Gentleman had said that when the county associations had made up their requirements they were to submit them to the officer commanding the district. But what the Volunteers wanted was to be able to make a Return to the War Office, and they did not want to send their Returns through the general officer commanding the district. Why should not the right hon. Gentleman embody in his Bill the establishment of a department of the War Office to which all communications could be made? He ventured to say that such a department for the Territorial Army, with Sir Edward Ward at its head, would be found of great assistance. He would like to know who were to be the divisional commanders, and whether they were to be under the general officer commanding the district. If that were to be so, he ventured to say from his knowledge of the Auxiliary Forces that such a plan would not work. Why should not divisional commanders be directly responsible to a department of the War Office established to deal with the Territorial Army? He asked also whether the divisional commanders were going to be officers who believed in and had sympathy with the Volunteers. It would be of no use to have old officers of the Regular Army who did not believe in the Volunteer Force, and who would turn round and say—"I told you so; they cannot do it." They wanted men who would command the confidence of the Volunteers, and if they did not secure the services of the right kind of officers the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was foredoomed to failure. Then the Volunteers were to serve in Ireland, he supposed, even under Home Rule. If that were so, they would probably have a very hot time of it. [Laughter, and cries of "order."]

Mr. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.), on a point of order, asked whether the hon. Member was in order in introducing the question of Home Rule, because if he was, then he himself would feel entitled to speak on that subject.

*Mr. CARLILE said the proposal that Volunteers were to serve in Ireland was a very great addition to their responsibility, in view of the other responsibilities to be imposed upon them. In return they were to get some privileges. They were not to serve on juries—a duty many of them liked because of getting the day off—and they were to be allowed to vote, a thing which they could do already under ordinary circumstances. Under those conditions and with those privileges the right hon. Gentleman would require 75,000 recruits a year; but he did not believe that he would get 10,000 on the terms he offered. The right hon. Gentleman had not told them the constitution of any Advisory Board at the War Office, which should give advice to the authorities on the subject of the Auxiliary Forces. An Advisory Board had sat for some years, and they would be interested to hear whether the right hon. Gentleman proposed to establish such a Board as they recently had. He could not overlook the fact that while hon. Members were now so anxious to get to bed, during the afternoon there had not been more than twenty-seven Members of the Liberal Party sitting behind the Secretary of State for War. He hoped the country would not fail to take note of the fact that when the right hon. Gentleman was making one of the most important statements of the century the keen interest of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons on vital matters affecting the defence of the country was illustrated by the presence of only twenty-seven of the supporters of the Government. No wonder under such circumstances they were in a great hurry to closure the debate and get home to bed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Haldane and Mr. Buchanan.

TERRITORIAL AND RESERVE FORCES BILL.

"To provide for the reorganisation of His Majesty's Military Forces, and for that purpose to authorise the establishment of County Associations and the raising and maintenance of a Territorial Force, and for amending the Acts relating to the Reserve Forces," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 92.]

Adjourned at twenty-six minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 5th March, 1907.

LUCAS PEERAGE.

Petition of Auberon Thomas Herbert, the claimant to the Barony of Lucas of Cradwell, that he may be permitted first to have discussed and decided by this House the question whether the said peerage descends as of right to the Petitioner, such question depending upon the interpretation to be placed upon the Clauses of Limitation in the Patent of Peerage (and the confirmatory Act of 15 Charles II., cxv.), and the validity of such clauses; and that the further question of abeyance be postponed for the future consideration of this House if it should decide against the Petitioner's contention that he is entitled to a Writ of Summons as of right; and also that he may be permitted to refer in his printed case and in any proceedings which may follow in this House to the documentary and other printed evidence in the case of the Lord Great Chamberlain determined by this House in the year 1902; read, and referred to the Committee for Privileges.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—London County Council (Tramways and Improvements).

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Presented; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

Heywood and Middleton Water Board Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: The orders made on the 25th of February and Thursday last discharged, and Bill committed.

Devonport Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The orders made on the 25th of February and Thursday last discharged, and Bill committed.

Kendal Corporation Bill [H.L.], Sheffield Corporation Bill [H.L.], Sutton Coldfield Rectory Bill [H.L.].—Reports from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): An Amendment made: Standing Committee negatived: The Report of Amendment to be received To-morrow.

Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): Amendments made: Standing Committee negatived: The Report of Amendments to be received To-morrow.

PETITIONS.

COMPANIES (DEBENTURES AND DEBENTURE STOCK) BILL [H.L.].

Petitions in favour of: of Central Association of Bankers; Institute of Directors; Committee for General Purposes of the Stock Exchange; London Chamber of Commerce Incorporated; Institute of Chartered Accountants; Banny Brothers and Company, Limited; Phœnix Assurance Company; Alliance Assurance, Limited, and others; Sun Insurance Office and other Companies; Equitable Life Assurance Company and another company; British and Mercantile Assurance Company and another company; Royal Exchange Assurance Company and another company; and the Guardian Assurance Company, Limited, and another company; Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSION.

Fifty-sixth Report from the Church Estates Commissioners, for the year preceding 1st March, 1907; Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Committee have nominated the following Lords to serve on the Standing Committee—

L. Archbp. of Canterbury.
L. Chancellor.
L. Archbp. of York.

E. Crewe. (*L. President.*)

M. Ripon. (*L. Privy Seal.*)

D. Bedford.
D. Devonshire.
D. Northumberland.

M. Winchester.
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
M. Linlithgow.

E. Liverpool. (*L. Steward.*)
E. Derby.
E. Denbigh.
E. Stamford.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Jersey.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Carnwath.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Portsmouth.
E. Clarendon.
E. Cadogan.
E. Malmesbury.
E. Westmeath.
E. Craven.
E. Onslow.
E. Beauchamp.
E. Stradbroke.
E. Vane (*M. Londonderry.*)
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
E. Lichfield.
E. Yarborough.
E. Russell.
E. Dartrey.
E. Faversham.
E. Lytton.
E. Ancaster.
E. Halsbury.
E. Plymouth.

V. Falkland.
V. Hutchinson. (*E. Donoughmore.*)
V. Cross.
V. Knutsford.
V. Llandaff.
V. Ridley.
V. Churchill.
V. Selby.
V. St. Aldwyn.

L. Bp. London.
L. Bp. Hereford.
L. Bp. Southwark.

L. Hastings.
L. Clinton
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Clifford of Chudleigh.
L. Barnard.
L. Saltoun.
L. Balfour.
L. Monson.
L. Kenyon.
L. Stewart of Garlies. (*E. Galloway.*)
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Harris
L. Colchester.
L. Ranfurly. (*E. Ranfurly.*)
L. Rosebery. (*E. Rosebery.*)
L. Kilmarnock. (*E. Errol.*)
L. Poltimore.
L. Denman.
L. Oranmore and Browne.
L. Kintore. (*E. Kintore.*)
L. Elgin. (*E. Elgin and Kincardine.*)
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Kinnaird.
L. Lawrence.
L. Castletown.
L. Wolverton.
L. Sandhurst.
L. Ampthill.
L. Reay.
L. Tweedmouth.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Herries.
L. Monkswell.
L. Ashbourne.
L. Montagu of Beaulieu.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Newton.
L. Stanmore.
L. Burghclere.
L. James.
L. Heneage.
L. Ludlow.
L. Newlands.
L. Avebury.
L. Alverstone.
L. Shuttleworth.
L. Waleran.
L. Knaresborough.
L. Desborough.
L. Weardale.
L. Haversham.

Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMPANIES (DEBENTURES AND DEBENTURE STOCK) BILL [H.L.]

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, I have presented petitions in favour of this Bill signed by the Central Association of Bankers, which comprises practically all the English bankers, both London and country, and though I cannot speak so positively as regards the Scottish and Irish banks, I know that some, and I believe the whole, are also in its favour. Other petitions are from the Committee of the Stock Exchange, from the London Chamber of Commerce, from the leading Insurance Companies, from Messrs. Baring, Rothschild, and other leading merchants, from the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and the Institute of Directors. The object is to carry out the recommendations of the strong Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to consider the position of the law relating to Joint Stock Companies.

There are several minor provisions as regards debentures with which, at any rate at this stage, I do not think I need trouble your Lordships. But the most important and the really urgent question has arisen in consequence of a decision given in the Law Courts last spring. That decision was, I presume, quite correct; but it was entirely in opposition to what we had all supposed to have been the law. It had always been assumed that if a Company had a right to issue, say, £1,000,000 in debentures, they might, if they had a surplus of funds, pay off some of them, and re-issue them when they could employ the money in their business, always provided that the legal maximum was not exceeded. This, in fact, was frequently done, and many Companies kept a balance of debentures or debenture stock in hand as a convenient security on which they could borrow from time to time from their bankers or an insurance company.

It has now been held, however, that debentures so purchased or redeemed are *ipso facto* cancelled and cannot be re-issued, and that those which have been so re-issued are no better than waste paper. This is a serious position for the Companies, and still more for the public, because no one who holds debentures or debenture stock can tell in such cases whether his security is good or bad; and no doubt the position would have considerably affected the value of debentures and debenture stock, if it had not been assumed by all concerned that Parliament would certainly alter the law so as to conform to what we had all assumed that it was, and what we think it ought to be. The Committee of the Board of Trade unanimously recommended that this should be done, and the Bill carries out their recommendation. So far as I know, there is absolutely no opposition to the Bill. It is really urgently required, and I hope your Lordships will give it a Second Reading.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Avebury.*)

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, I am sure noble Lords on both sides of the House will agree that there is some necessity for a change in company law. His Majesty's Government have no intention of opposing the Second Reading of this Bill; and it may interest your Lordships to know that the Government propose next week to introduce into your Lordships' House a Bill dealing with this subject, and covering most, if not all, of the points dealt with by the noble Lord.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, I am very glad indeed to hear from the noble Earl who has just sat down that the Government intend to introduce a general measure. There are, no doubt, other points in company law to which attention has been called by the Departmental Committee, and which it is very desirable should be dealt with. This is, however, a modest Bill, dealing only with one part of the subject, and which it may be easier to pass than a larger measure. I am, therefore, glad to hear that the Government offer no opposition to the Second Reading.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I think it would be for the convenience of the House, if this Bill is now read a second time, that it should not be proceeded with until your Lordships have had an opportunity of seeing the Government Bill. The noble Lord may then wish to propose certain Amendments. He may think that some of his points are better than our points; if so, of course he could propose to include them in the larger measure. But I think it would be a pity to proceed any further with this Bill until the House has had an opportunity of seeing the Government Bill.

LORD AVEBURY: I will wait and confer with my noble friend on the subject before proceeding further with the Bill.

On Question, Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

AUSTRALIAN STATES CONSTITUTION BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, *5th March*, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz.:—London Port and Docks Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—London County Council (Tramways and Improvements).

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Gas Companies (Removal of Sulphur Restrictions) Bill; Mitcham and Wimbledon District Gas Bill; Swansea Harbour Bill (by Order); Neath, Pontardawe and Brynaman Railway Bill (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Standing Orders.—Ordered, That Mr. Crombie be discharged from the Select Committee on Standing Orders and that Mr. Eugene Wason be added.—(*Mr. Ellis.*)

Standing Orders. — Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:

"That, in the case of the Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers), Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the Condition that Clause 18 is modified, so as to apply only to the intended railways, and to those companies concerned whose shareholders approve thereof:—That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the Boston Spa Gas, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

"That, in the case of the Burnley Corporation, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for the Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill."

"That in the case of the Great Northern and City Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'Milner's Safe Company,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'Walter Clarkson,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Barry Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Cardiff Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the

Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That in the case of the Port Talbot Railway and Docks Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Taff Vale Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

"That, in the case of the Bristol Corporation Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

Resolutions agreed to.

SELECTION (PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899) (COMMISSIONERS).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That, in pursuance of the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, they had selected the following Fifteen Members to form the Parliamentary Panel of Members of this House to act as Commissioners: Mr. M'Crae, Sir John Tuke, Mr. Levy, Mr. Weir, Mr. Findlay, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. John Dewar, Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Wilkie, Mr. Bell, Major Anstruther-Gray, Mr. Ernest Gardner, Viscount Dalrymple, and Mr. M'Callum.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour; From Bullgill; Broughton Moor; Buckhill; Camerton; Clowne; Gillhead; Seymour; and, Stanley Common Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Two Petitions from Northampton, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (TRIAL OF ELECTION PETITIONS, 1906–7).

Return [presented 4th March] to be printed. [No. 65.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1907–8 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).

Estimate presented,—showing the several Services for which a Vote on Account is required for the year ending 31st March, 1908 [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 64.]

NAVY (DOCKYARD EXPENSE ACCOUNTS, 1905–6).

Annual Accounts presented,—for 1905–6 of Shipbuilding and Dockyard Transactions, etc., with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 66.]

NAVY (VICTUALLING YARD MANUFACTURING ACCOUNTS, 1905–6).

Annual Accounts presented,—of the Cost of Manufacturing Provisions, Victualling Stores, etc., at the Home Victualling Yards and Malta Yard for 1905–6, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 67.]

CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSION.

Copy presented, of Fifty-sixth Report from the Church Estates Commissioners for the year preceding 1st March, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

RATHMINES AND RATHGAR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 1st March ; Mr. John O'Connor] ; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL WORKS.

Copy presented, of Memorandum showing Progress and Expenditure, etc., on Items included in the Naval Works Act [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL WORKS.

Copy presented, of Statement showing the total estimated Cost of each Work as shown in The Naval Works Act, 1905, and as subsequently revised, the estimated Expenditure thereon during 1907–8 and 1908–9, and the expected date of Completion [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERY (REPORT).

Copy ordered, "of Report of the Trustees of the National Gallery for the year 1906, with Appendices."—(*Mr. Runciman.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Delay in Erection of Labourers Cottages at Ballymoney.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that under the Labourers Act, 1906, cottages in the Ballymoney rural district in respect of which schemes were approved and loans sanctioned in the spring of 1906, but which were not built up to 1st November, will receive no capitation grant under the Act, and, subject to the share of the district in the sum of £392 granted to the whole county, will have to be paid for out of the rates at the old rate of £4 17s. 9d. per cent. ; and whether the Government has at any time received any representation against this state of affairs on behalf of the inhabitants of the rural district.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Loans were sanctioned in the spring of 1905, not 1906, for the erection of 114 cottages in this district, and all but six of these cottages were completed before 1st November last. The district council, therefore, are responsible for the fact that the Exchequer contribution is not payable in respect of these six cottages, for the completion of which before 1st November there appears to have been ample time. There is no record of the receipt of any representation such as is mentioned in the Question.

MR. MOORE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the rates for the Ballymoney rural district for the year 1907–8 have been raised by 2d. in the pound for labourers cottages owing to the effect of the Labourers Act, 1906, and that, in addition to this, over 300 applications for cottages are now before the rural Council, and will he say what was received by the rural council for labourers cottages from the Exchequer grant in the financial year ending prior to the Labourers Act, 1906, and what will be the corresponding amount in the present year.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are aware that a statement to the effect mentioned in the first part of the Question was made at the last meeting of the Antrim County Council. Applications for 259 cottages have been made to the Ballymoney Rural District Council. The amount received by the council in the financial year ending March, 1906, was £661 ; the amount for the present year will be £150, approximately. It is to be remembered that this council was able to provide before 1st November last 108 cottages at very little expense to the rates, and a rate of 2d. in the £ cannot be regarded as excessive having regard to the fact that the Acts allow a rate of 1s. and, in exceptional cases, 1s. 3d. As regards the new applications, the local authority have the very considerable advantage afforded by the reduced terms for loans under the new Act, and by the payment by the Government of 36 per cent. of the annual charge on such loans.

Restoration of Evicted Tenants in South Wexford.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that dissatisfaction prevails in South Wexford owing to the fact that the evicted tenants are not being restored to their homes; and whether, as the season for putting in the crops is at hand, anything can be done to hasten their restoration; can he say if the Estates Commissioners have made any progress with reference to the Boxwell tenants, the Coolroe tenants, and the Sigginshaggard tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are anxious to deal with the cases of evicted tenants in county Wexford as soon as possible. In the case of the Boxwell estate eighteen applications for reinstatement have been received and the Commissioners have referred them to an inspector for investigation. Three applications from the Coolroe estate have been lodged. The owner of this estate has offered it for sale to the Commissioners, who will have it inspected as soon as possible. In the case of the third estate mentioned, two applications have been received and investigated. The Commissioners unstand that the reinstatement of the applicants by the landlord will depend upon his coming to terms of sale with his tenants generally.

Delay in Sale of Major Hall's Estate near Athenry.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that agreements to purchase their holdings have been signed and filed with the Estates Commissioners in connection with the estate of Major H. T. Hall, near Athenry, for a considerable length of time past; and will he explain why, after a requisition being served on the Commissioners by the landlord to inspect the grazing lands on the same property, with a view to sale, no steps have been taken since October last to expedite or see the sale through.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners will deal with this estate in its proper order of priority. The Commissioners had a preliminary inspection made of 417 acres of untenanted land on the estate, and made a provisional offer for its purchase in October last, but the negotiations have been suspended until the Commissioners shall be in a position to make an offer for the remainder of the property. The Commissioners will have the entire estate inspected in due course, but this cannot be for some time, having regard to the claims of prior cases to be dealt with.

Application under the Labourers Acts in Country Antrim.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how many applications under the Labourers' Acts have been received by the several rural districts in the county of Antrim and were pending on 1st February, 1907; and what was the corresponding number on 1st February, 1906, before the Exchequer grant of £2,400 per annum was reduced.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The number of cottages applied for in county Antrim up to 1st February, 1907, was upwards of 1,000. The Local Government Board have no particulars of the number of applications pending at the corresponding period of last year.

Increase of Rates in the Aghalee Rural District.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the fact that the reduction of the Exchequer grant for the purposes of the Labourers Acts to county Antrim from £2,400 to £392, under the Labourers Act of last session, has involved an increase in the rates for the Aghalee rural district in respect of cottages built before the Act; and what steps he proposes to take.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have no information that the circumstance mentioned has involved an increase in the rates in the district referred to. According to the mover of the estimates of the rates, there will be practically no change in the rates. No action in the matter seems to be necessary.

The New Irish Judgeship and Ratepayers in County Antrim.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what steps he will take in fulfilment of the pledge that the Labourers Act will not suffer by the appointment of the new judge; and if part of the £3,500 to be paid in lieu thereof will be applied to remedy the hardship on the labourers and ratepayers in county Antrim for the year 1906–7 brought about by the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I propose to-morrow to introduce a Bill providing for the abolition of the next two judgeships of the King's Bench Division which shall become vacant after the 1st instant. No hardship has been inflicted on the labourers and ratepayers of county Antrim by the Act of last year. The county is now on precisely the same footing as the other counties of Ireland, whereas under the former system it received an undue advantage.

Exchequer Grants to County Down in respect of Labourers' Cottages.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the amount of the Exchequer grant made to the county Down in respect of labourers cottages in the year ending 1906; and what is the amount which will be available in the year 1907–8 from the same source by reason of the passing of the Labourers Act of 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Full particulars of the distribution of the Exchequer grant for labourers cottages are given in the tables set forth at pages 293 to 500 of the Report of the Local Government Board for the year ending 31st March, 1906. The calculations in respect of the current financial year are not yet completed.

Petition of Portsmouth Postmen re Dining Club.

Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the postmen at Portsmouth submitted a petition on the question of the dining club to the surveyor on the 18th January last, and that, despite an application for a reply, the petition has not been acknowledged; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The petition of the 18th January was duly forwarded by the postmaster to the surveyor, but through inadvertence was not acknowledged by the latter. A request for a reply to the petition was made on the 14th ultimo, and was answered by the postmaster to the effect that he was awaiting a reply from the surveyor. In the meantime the petition had been considered and an answer was given on the 28th of February.

Prices of English Barley.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can give the quantities and prices of barley sold at the undermentioned markets in the months of October, November, and December last: Bishop's Stortford, Chelmsford, York, Darlington, Norwich, and Cambridge; and whether he can state the quantities and prices of barley sold in the said months in two or three other large barley markets of England and Scotland, and the prices brewers and distillers of pot-still whiskey have been paying for malt during the same period.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The following table gives the prices and quantities of barley sold at the towns mentioned, as returned to the Board under the Corn Returns Act, 1882. The three other towns included in the table are those at which, next to Norwich, the largest quantity of barley was returned as purchased in 1906. The Corn Returns Act does not apply to Scotland. We have no information as to the prices of malt.

Town.	October (4 weeks).				November (4 weeks).				December (5 weeks).			
	Quantity.		Average Price.		Quantity.		Average Price.		Quantity.		Average Price.	
	Qrs.	Bush.	s.	d.	Qrs.	Bush.	s.	d.	Qrs.	Bush.	s.	d.
Bishop's Stortford	18,018	5	25	10	18,395	1	25	2	16,955	1	25	1
Chelmsford - -	16,888	6	25	4	9,926	6	24	11	11,590	1	24	7
York - - -	6,709	1	22	10	5,295	1	22	5	5,231	7	22	0
Darlington - -	5,240	5	21	10	4,525	6	22	11	4,595	0	21	6
Norwich - -	81,795	2	25	1	59,941	5	24	7	66,449	2	24	3
Cambridge - -	19,907	3	25	2	12,680	2	24	0	8,028	7	23	10
Lincoln - -	64,694	3	24	11	42,014	3	23	11	54,335	3	23	5
Bury St. Edmund's	32,386	2	26	1	28,617	0	24	10	29,968	1	24	7
Berwick - -	22,551	4	22	1	17,561	1	22	4	19,962	7	22	3

The Colonial Conference and Treatment of British Indians in the Colonies.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): To ask the Secretary of State for India if the Government proposes that the *status* and treatment of His Majesty's Indian subjects in the Colonies shall receive due consideration at the approaching Imperial Conference.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Conference is a conference with self-governing Colonies. The principle on which the agenda were drawn up gives priority to subjects that a majority of the Governments taking part have intimated their desire to discuss. The subject to which the hon. Member refers is not included; but should opportunity offer and time permit I would propose to invite the Conference to consider it.

North Sea Fisheries Investigation.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in view of the fact that His Majesty's Government intend to continue the North Sea Fisheries investigations for another year from the 22nd July next, will he state whether the investigations by Foreign Governments will be continued until that date; and will he name the Powers participating in the investigations, and the amount which they have respectively expended in these international inquiries up to the present time.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway have expressed their willingness to continue the investigations, and the amount of their contributions to the joint expenses will be found at page 41 of Command Paper 2966 of 1906. But, in addition, each country has spent considerable sums on steamers and laboratories, etc., maintained in connection with the inquiry.

Administration of Law and Justices in Scotland—Salaries, Expenses and Pensions.

MR. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): To ask the Secretary for Scotland, if he will state, in respect of the current or latest year for which Parliament has made financial provision, the number of persons of all grades in receipt of salaries, pensions, and expenses respectively in respect of the administration of law and justice in Scotland, with the aggregate amounts of their salaries, pensions, and expenses; and the number of persons of all grades in all other departments of the civil public service of Scotland, with the aggregate amounts of their salaries, pensions, and expenses respectively provided by Parliament.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am not satisfied that I should be justified in having this information collected at the public expense, and I must point out that several other Departments than those for which the Secretary for Scotland is responsible are concerned. The hon. Member will find most of the particulars that he desires in the Civil Service Estimates and the Appropriation Accounts.

Pensions of Government Servants—Case of William King.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether his Department can make at an early date a Report as to the desirability of some alteration in the method of treating old servants of the State, as reported in the case of William King, who has served forty-seven years and eight months under the Admiralty and War Office, yet, in consequence of his divided service, he was denied a pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This man was not refused a pension because of any question of any services divided between two departments, but because his service as a hammerman in Woolwich Dockyard was not a pensionable service. He was, however, granted a gratuity of £61 5s.

Premium Bonus System in Mechanical Department, Woolwich Dockyard.

MR. CROOKS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the premium bonus system has been introduced into the Royal Dockyard, Woolwich, Mechanical Department, contrary to the trade union rules and conditions under which private firms employ scientific instrument makers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The premium bonus system is already in force in the shell factory of the Royal Laboratory and in the baling section of the Royal Army Clothing Department, and is found to work satisfactorily. It is intended to introduce this system into the instrument repairing shop in the Royal Dockyard, Woolwich, for trial, as it is considered that such a system will be to the advantage of the men.

Employment of Casual Sorters in Eastern District Post Office.

MR. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that on 27th December, 1906, five full-time casual sorters were introduced at the Eastern District Post Office; and whether, in view of his statement on 27th March last that the number of casuals is gradually being reduced, he will say whether this addition is in accordance with his instructions; and, if he will take the necessary steps to prevent a further increase.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The five men in question were employed in connection with the transfer of certain work from the Mount Pleasant Parcel Depot to the Eastern District Office. The arrangement, so far as the employment of these men is concerned, is a temporary one, and will cease as soon as a permanent revision, which is now under consideration, is sanctioned.

Proposed Works in the Upper Mersey.

SIR J. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): To ask the President of the Board of Trade on what date did the Commissioners for the Conservancy of the River Mersey give their consent to the works named in the Notice in the *Gazette* of the 22nd January; whether the traders interested in, and the riparian owners on, the Upper Mersey were informed of the intention to execute the works named before consent was given; and whether, before giving consent the Commissioners took steps to assure themselves that the works would inflict no injury upon such traders and owners, and, if so, what steps.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The consent of the Mersey Conservancy

Commissioners has not yet been given to the works referred to by the hon. Member, which are proposed to be undertaken by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board to prevent the present navigable channel between Liverpool and the sea becoming more difficult for navigation. No objections to the proposed works have been received by the Conservancy from the traders of the Upper Mersey or others interested in the navigation of the river, and they do not anticipate that any injury will result from the works.

Local Printing of Factory Forms.

Mr. HILLS (Durham): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the Home Office insist on Form No. 13 (Notice of Accidents) being printed in London and Edinburgh, and refuse to allow it to be printed locally in the mining districts, whereby expense and inconvenience is caused to those districts and loss to the printers therein.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Under the Notice of Accidents Act of last session, notices of accidents in mines have now to be sent on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State. This form has been printed officially by the Stationery Office, and is supplied at a low rate by the sale agents for official publications in London and the provinces. The reason why permission has not been granted to local printers to reprint the form is that great inconvenience has been caused in the past by local reprints of official forms; forms, for example, continuing to be issued and used after they had been amended or superseded by other forms. I am not aware that any inconvenience is caused by the new arrangement, supplies of the official forms can be ordered from the sale agents either directly or through any local bookseller, and I may take the opportunity of saying that steps have been taken to meet the wishes of owners desiring to have the forms supplied in duplicate in book form.

Drawing of Privilege Pay at Home Treasury by Indian Officials on Combined Leave.

Sir SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has yet received a reply from the Government of India as to the desirability of allowing officers on combined leave in this country to draw their privilege leave pay at the Home Treasury; and, if so, what decision has been come to.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Government of India have recommended that officers on combined leave under the civil leave rules shall have the option of drawing their privilege pay at the Home Treasury. I have decided to adopt this recommendation.

Administration of Law and Justice in Ireland—Salaries, Expenses, and Pensions.

Mr. GINNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state, in respect of the current or latest year for which Parliament has made financial provision, the number of persons of all grades in receipt of salaries, pensions, and expenses respectively, in respect of the administration of law and justice in Ireland, with the aggregate amounts of their salaries, pensions, and expenses; and the number of persons of all grades in all the other departments of the civil public service of Ireland, with the aggregate amounts of their salaries, pensions, and expenses respectively, provided by Parliament.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I beg to refer the hon. Member to the Annual Estimates and Appropriation Accounts, in which he will find a great deal of the information asked for. The particulars could not, in any case, be condensed within the limits of an Answer, and to prepare a Return on the subject would be a very lengthy task, involving much labour and considerable expense. I do not think I should be justified in consenting to give such a Return.

Irish Rural Councils benefiting under Section 18 of the Labourers Act 1906.

Mr. GINNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant if Ireland will he grant, if moved for, a Return of the rural district councils in Ireland, showing the amount by which each council has benefited under Section 18 of the Labourers Act, 1906, the amount which it is entitled to borrow after that benefit under Section 17 of the Labourers Act, 1883, and the amount by which that limit may be exceeded under Section 12 of the Labourers Act, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The calculations as to the shares of the several districts in the residue of the Exchequer contribution, in accordance with Section 18 of the Act of 1906, are at present being made, and the amounts will be made known in due course. Parliamentary Return, No. 194, of last session, as to labourers cottages, gives, in column 6, the amount required to be raised annually in each rural district for the repayment of loans sanctioned, and in Column 7 the amount which could be raised annually by the maximum rate of 1s. in the £, allowed by Section 17 of the Act of 1883. This latter amount would, under Section 12 of the Act of 1906, be increased by one-fourth in any case in which the rating limit may be extended to 1s. 3d. in the pound. I think these particulars will be sufficient for the hon. Member's purpose. The staffs of the district councils and the Local Government Board are at present very severely taxed in connection with the new schemes for labourers cottages which are being prepared, and the preparation of lengthy Returns at this juncture would proportionately delay the operations of the new Act.

Outstanding Appeals in the Land Commissioners Court.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what were the number of appeals outstanding in the Court of the Land Commission on the 1st of January, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907 respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*)

1st January, 1903 -	- 13,337
,, ,, 1904 -	- 14,420
,, ,, 1905 -	- 14,071
,, ,, 1906 -	- 11,249
,, ,, 1907 -	- 7,570

Marine Works in Ireland.

MR. MOONEY (Newry): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the number of cases, during the year ending the 31st December, 1906, in which schemes in connection with marine works in Ireland, approved by the local authorities and the Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland, have been hampered and delayed by legal difficulties arising out of the limit placed by Law on the amount that can be raised by county councils in respect of new works.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am aware of but two cases that come within the terms of this Question, viz.: the cases of Kinvara, county Galway, and Ballaghaline, county Clare, both of which have been the subject of recent Questions in Parliament.

MR. MOONEY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the number of schemes in connection with the construction and improvement of marine works in Ireland for which applications for grants were made to the Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland, for the period since the last-issued Report of that body to the 31st December, 1906; and can he give the names of such places, the number of such schemes sanctioned, the number completed, the number started but not completed, with reasons for delay in the last instance.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It is difficult to give categorical replies to the Questions as put, but the following will probably afford the desired information. About eighteen applications were received by the Department of Agriculture during the period named. Assistance in seven of them was promised. One of these was to contribute to the cost of supporting a light at Glandore Harbour. The Department contributed. Two related to dredging at Courtown and Balbriggan Harbours. The Department carried out the work at both places, but further dredging will be done when opportunity offers. In one (Portaferry) the Department lodged their contribution with the county authorities, who have charge of the work. One (Port Ballintoy) awaits the making of arrangements by a local committee for a conference with the Department's officer. In one (Wreckport) a winch or other such engine has to be provided, and the Department are taking steps to procure a suitable one. In one (Port Ushet) the Department were in a position to promise a contribution only very recently. In three cases (Seafield, Newtown Creek, and Cushenden) local co-operation has not been forthcoming up to the present time. In one (Sandycove) the local authority was requested to state the amount of its contribution, but has not done so up to the present. In one (Loughshinny) the Department had already given financial assistance, and the application was for further aid which the Department were not in a position to give. Another application was to clear mud from areas at Arthurstown, Duncannon, and Ballyhack. The vessel owned by the Department, is, however, a sand dredger, and is not suitable for the work. In four cases (Barna, Boatstrand, Ballinagoul, and Blind Harbour) the fact that practically all the Department's funds which are applicable to works of the kind were hypothecated prevented co-operation with the local authorities. In one of them, however (Barna), inspection was promised, and this will take place as soon as possible. In one case (Fethard) the local authority requested that an officer of the Department should confer with them as to what had best be done in the interests of the local fishermen, and the matter is in process of arrangement.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of Fanny Brady, of Kilmore.

MR. SAMUEL YOUNG (Cavan, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been called to the case of Fanny Brady, Cumming estate, Kilmore townland, Ballyjamesduff, who was evicted in 1882; whether they are aware that thirty-six of the forty-six acres of her holding have been let by the trustees to three grabbers; whether the Estates Commissioners will use their influence with the trustees to have her restored to the holding on the same terms as the grabbers, or at least to such part of it as is still derelict; and, if not, whether steps will be taken to provide for her elsewhere.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received from Frances Brady an application for reinstatement, and have referred the case to an inspector for investigation, but have not yet received his Report. In the meantime the Commissioners are not aware of the facts alleged in the Question.

Surplus on Army Clothing attributable to Reduction of Strength of the Army.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office what proportion of the surplus of £165,900, on supplies and clothing, voted during 1906–7, is attributable to reductions effected in the strength of the Regular forces.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) Approximately £130,000.

Loans to Volunteer Corps for Drill Halls, and Rifle Ranges.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he will lay upon the Table the details composing the sum of £439,000 required for loans to Volunteer corps, for drill halls and rifle ranges.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he will issue a Statement showing what mortgages on Volunteer property are to be taken over by the War Office.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) £439,000 is the sum required to take over 233 mortgages on Volunteer property, now held by the Public Works Loan Commissioners under the Military Lands Act. This sum includes £13,000 interest due 21st March. The interest on the various mortgages is at the rate of from $2\frac{3}{4}$ to $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. As was stated by my right hon. friend on Monday, only the mortgagee is changed, and the mortgagee will now be the War Office. The War Office will have no more powers than the Public Works Commissioners. I do not think any useful purpose would be served by the presentation of a detailed list of the 233 mortgages in question, but I shall be happy to let the hon. Member see the list if he wishes it.

Method of Slaughtering Cattle for British Troops in Egypt.

Mr. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the method of slaughtering cattle for the use of the British troops in Egypt is a cruel one, causing much unnecessary torture to the animals slaughtered, particularly to larger animals such as cows and oxen; whether the slaughtering is done by contractors for the meat supply or their servants, or by persons directly in British employment; and will he call for a Report on the subject from the General Officer Commanding in Egypt, and take any steps necessary to secure more humane methods.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A Report on the subject has already been received. The General Officer Commanding in Egypt has made very careful inquiries into the matter, and reports that all cattle at Cairo and Alexandria for the use of the British troops are slaughtered at the Government abattoirs, and under the supervision of the Egyptian Government officials, by the servants of the contractors. They are slaughtered in accordance with Mahomedan law, which alone prevails in Egypt. Unconsciousness is instantaneous, and death ensues in a few seconds. The system of inspection is most careful, and every effort is made to ensure the avoidance of cruelty.

Army Officers engaged on Extra-Regimental Employment.

Sir D. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea District): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the number of officers in the Regular Army engaged in special extra-regimental employment; whether, seeing that there is a shortage of officers in that Army, he will consider the expediency of recalling some or all such officers; and whether he can state the grounds on which the extra-regimental employment of officers is justified or permitted.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Thirty officers are now engaged on special extra-regimental employment, as shown on page 68 of the Monthly Army List. The cavalry is the only arm of the service at present short of officers, and there is only one cavalry officer in special extra-regimental employment. As regards extra-regimental employment generally, it is regarded on the one hand as an Imperial duty to supply officers for such British possessions as require their services, and on the other as a very valuable addition to the military education of the officers concerned.

Appointments in South Wales—Alleged Preference to Men from North Wales.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Prime Minister, if his attention has been called to the dissatisfaction felt in South Wales at the practice of Ministers of filling important appointments with North Wales men only, the population of North Wales being less than one-fourth that of Wales and Monmouthshire; whether it is the case that, since the present administration was formed, no one of the six important Welsh offices carrying salaries of from £800 to £1,500 per annum that have fallen to the patronage of members of the Government has been filled from South Wales; and can he allay the dissatisfaction by an assurance that the appointments have not been influenced by local preferences, but are due solely to the fact that South Wales men of equal merit to those selected were not available at the time when the appointments were made.

(*Answered by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*) I have no knowledge of this matter except what can be gathered from my hon. friend's Question. I have not heard of the existence of dissatisfaction in South Wales, nor am I able to say from what part of Wales the posts referred to by my hon. friend were filled.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

H.M.S. "Dreadnought."

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty why the battleship "Dreadnought" has not been tested at the Lagos manœuvres, under Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson; and whether he can state when the Admiralty proposes to test her capacity to manœuvre with battleships fitted with reciprocating engines, such as the ships constituting the Channel Fleet.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Admiralty have arranged the trials of the "Dreadnought" in the manner which they consider best calculated to test her capabilities. The manœuvring powers of the "Dreadnought" are quite satisfactory, and compare favourably with those of ships fitted with reciprocating engines.

"The Truth about the Navy."

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the Treasury lay down that all books bought for ships' libraries must be charged to Class 2, Vote 23, Item I, of the Civil Service Estimates; whether Treasury permission was obtained to charge the purchase of the pamphlet "The Truth about the Navy," for issue to ships' libraries to the Victualling Vote of the Navy; and, if not, will he explain why.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The copies of this pamphlet distributed to the fleet were obtained from the Stationery Office, and I regret that it was incorrectly stated in reply to my hon. friend's question on 19th December last that the expense would be charged to Navy Vote 2.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the decision to purchase and circulate the pamphlet, "The Truth about the Navy," was made by the Board; whether any protests were received from officers afloat against the circulation of this literature to the lower deck; and whether he is aware that the late Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean ordered the ships under his command not to issue this book to the ships' libraries.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. As regards the second part, it would not be consonant with the interests of the service to make any statement. As regards the last part of the Question I have no information.

Sailors' Institutes.

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the new Sailors' Institute at Weymouth, which has lately been erected at a cost of £10,000, of which sum the Admiralty paid one-half, and which was opened by the First Lord of the Admiralty on 28th February, is to be run on temperance lines; whether he is aware that the decision to allow no intoxicating liquors to be consumed upon the premises was arrived at as the result of a plebiscite of the lower deck, taken by Admiral Wilson's orders, in which a majority of the men voted in favour of the home being conducted on these lines; and whether he will arrange for consulting the wishes of the men in a similar manner in regard to the management of all sailors' homes and institutions over which the Admiralty have any control.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The management of the Weymouth sailors' home is in the hands of a committee composed of officers and men of the Channel fleet, with the Mayor of Weymouth and other representatives of the town. The Admiralty have no direct control over the management of this sailors' home or of any other sailors' homes or institutes.

Cumberland Garrison Artillery Volunteers.

MR. BURNYEAT (Whitehaven): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the guns used for drill at Whitehaven by the No. 1 Company, 1st Cumberland Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers), consist of one 32-pounder smooth-bore muzzle-loading gun, 42 cwts., date 1848, one 64-pounder rifled muzzle-loading gun, 58 cwts. (converted from a smooth bore in 1870), and one 64-pounder rifled muzzle-loading gun, 71 cwts., date 1868; and, seeing that such guns are of no practical use in modern warfare, he will state whether this is the recognised armament of the Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers) throughout the country, and within what time he expects to remedy such a state of affairs.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The facts as regards the drill guns of this corps at Whitehaven are as stated in the Question. The whole question of the armament of the Artillery of the new territorial forces is being carefully considered, but I cannot state at this stage when I can hope to have the necessary reforms put into operation.

Malta.

MR. GIBBS (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when he will be in a position to make a statement as to the appointment of a Civil Governor for Malta.

MR. HALDANE: I am afraid that I cannot forecast the date on which I shall be able to give the information alluded to in the Question. The post is not actually vacant at the present moment.

Field Artillery Guns.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will lay upon the Table of the House as full information as possible with regard to the converted 15-pounder field guns with which it is proposed to arm the field artillery of the new Territorial Army, showing, particularly, the effective range, muzzle velocity, extent of recoil, number of bullets in shrapnel shell, and rate of aimed fire per minute of the converted gun as compared with the quick-firing guns now supplied to the regular field artillery of the British, French, and German armies respectively.

MR. HALDANE: The Answer is as follows—

—	British.		French.	German.
	15 Pr.* Converted	18 Pr.		
(1) Effective range (yards) -	5,900	6,200	6,010	5,500
(2) Muzzle Velocity (feet seconds)	1,581	1,590	1,736	1,525
(3) Extent of Recoil on Carriage	3·4 feet	3·4 feet	3·57 feet	3·66 feet
(4) Extent of Recoil on ground	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
(5) Number of bullets in shrapnel	230	364	300	300
(6) Rate of aimed fire per minute	Trials not yet complete	20	20	20

* The trials with this equipment are not completed yet.

The Calcutta Madrasah.

DR. HAZEL (West Bromwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether Dr. E. Denison Ross still holds the appointment of principal of the Calcutta Madrasah; if so, whether the services of a competent Oriental scholar have been secured to carry on the duties of that office during the absence of Dr. Ross in England on leave; and what are the educational qualifications of the gentleman selected and the reasons for his selection.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I understand that Dr. Denison Ross still holds the appointment of principal of the Calcutta Madrasah. I do not know what arrangements the local Government proposes to make, in the event of his taking leave, for filling his place temporarily.

British Tariff Preferences in South Africa.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table of the House details of the British tariff preference which is now in force in South Africa.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I would refer the hon. Member to the South African Customs Union Convention in Cd. 2977. The preferential treatment for which provision is there made is accorded to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as well as to the United Kingdom.

Chinese Miners in the Federated Malay States.

MR. A. ALLEN (Christchurch): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has obtained the Report promised in July last from the High Commissioner of the Federated Malay States as to the truth of the statement that, in certain of the mines of the Federated Malay States, the Chinese miners receive part payment of their earnings in opium; and whether, if the allegation be true, any steps have been taken to put an end to this practice.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have sent the hon. Member privately a copy of the Report showing the exact nature of the practice to which his Question refers. The Secretary of State has informed the High Commissioner that the practice must cease.

Labour Recruiting in Portuguese East Africa.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the permission to recruit given to Mr. J. B. Robinson in Portuguese East Africa has been rendered inoperative owing to obstruction from any quarter; if so, from what quarter; and what steps are being taken by the Government to render the permission operative.

MR. CHURCHILL: I understand that the Portuguese Government, who granted one licence to Mr. Robinson's agent, have refused to grant passes to his native runners. As I have already explained, the Portuguese Government have agreed to a Commission of inquiry into the whole question, and pending that inquiry no further steps can be taken.

Jamaica—Suggested Government Grant.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to give any assistance by grant or loan to the Island of Jamaica; and, if so, what is the proposed amount of such grant or loan.

MR. CHURCHILL: I can only refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for West Bristol.†

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Having regard to the anxiety that is felt on this question, will the Government come to a decision at an early date?

MR. CHURCHILL: The latest request I received from Jamaica was that we should defer any decision until a deputation from the island had arrived.

The Bagdad Railway.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will request the British Ambassador at Constantinople to obtain information as to whether the Bagdad Railway is being extended beyond Bulgurlu; and whether any kilometric guarantee for any further extension has been given to the promoters by the Turkish Government.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): It is not necessary to send special instructions on this subject. The interest attaching to it is fully recognised, and information when available is of course furnished to His Majesty's Government. I think I may also add that it generally appears in the Press.

MR. ASHLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the railway is being extended? It is a very important question.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I know it is important, but I have no information at the present time.

Egyptian Ministry of Finance—British Officials.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the number of British officials engaged in the Egyptian Ministry of Finance;

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† See Col. 470.

and what is their rate of increase since the conclusion of the Anglo-French agreement of 8th April, 1904.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The whole subject of the employment of Europeans in the Egyptian Civil Service is dealt with in Lord Cromer's Report for 1906, which will shortly be presented to Parliament. It will contain full information as to the number and rate of increase of European officials in various departments, including that of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance.

Salaries of the Natives and Europeans.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what are the salaries and pensions payable to Native and European officials respectively attached to the Egyptian Ministry of Finance; when were they fixed; and within what period, if at all, and by how much have they been augmented.

I beg further to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what are the salaries and pensions payable to Natives and Europeans, respectively engaged in the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior; when were they fixed; and within what period, if at all, and by how much have they been augmented.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have no information enabling a comparison to be drawn between the salaries and pensions of Native and European officials respectively. There is one pension law applicable to all officials, whether Native or European. The salaries attached to the various offices are given in the Egyptian Budget. I think it would be invidious to select one or two particular departments for a comparison of this kind between Egyptian and European officials.

British Trade Arrangements with the Dominican Republic.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, by Articles 2, 4, 6, and 7 of the Treaty of 6th March, 1850, Great Britain obtained the benefits of most-favoured-nation treatment in trade with the Dominican Republic; whether hese benefits have subsisted since that date; and whether they will still continue under the Treaty recently concluded between the Dominican Republic and the United States of America.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Treaty in question, except the Articles relating to peace and friendship, expired on 14th July, 1897.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Will the benefits continue under the new Treaty?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am making inquiries. I have not sufficient information at the present moment to enable me to say.

British Trade with the United States.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is the view of His Majesty's Government that the most-favoured-nation clauses contained in the Treaties between Great Britain and the United States of America apply to the case of imports in the United States from Cuba; and, if so, whether they will make representations with a view to securing the admission of British goods into the United States on the same terms as Cuban goods.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Answer to the first Question is "Yes." Representations were made by the late Government, but, as the view of the United States Government differs from that held here, the action taken was without result. And, considering the representations already made, and the discussion with regard to them, I do not consider that there would be any use in reopening the question at the present moment.

Standing Joint Committee.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will initiate legislation during this session for transferring the control of county police to county councils, and for abolishing the Standing Joint Committees, and thus accede to the petition from the West Riding County Council which was presented orally to this House on 28th November, 1906.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I am afraid I do not see my way to propose legislation on this subject.

Police and Motor Car Speeds.

MR. LIDDELL (Down, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the hearing of a summons in the West London police court against Mr. George Thompson, heard on 27th November, 1906, for driving a motor car at a dangerous speed in Kensington Road, when Constable Charles Mitchell, 48F, swore his only grounds for this charge were contained in a note taken by him at the time of the occurrence, and that he had made no other report to his superiors; and whether, seeing that the note, when produced, contained no reference to speed or driving, and the magistrate dismissed the charge, he will say who was responsible for the charge being made and on what evidence, and if he will provide for the payment of the costs of the defence when unwarranted police charges of this nature are made.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have consulted the magistrate by whom this case was heard. He informs me that the note produced by the constable did refer to the speed of the motor, and that he saw no reason to suppose that the constable did not act in perfect good faith. Though—as usually happens in such cases—there was conflict of evidence, the case appeared to him to be a proper one for judicial investigation. In view of his remarks I see no ground for further action on my part. I could not in any event provide for payment of the costs of the defence.

MR. LIDDELL: In framing new regulation will the right hon. Gentleman make provsision to compensate motorists for false charges made by the police?

MR. GLADSTONE: I can answer no Question as to legislation. It does not come within my province.

Provision for the Blind.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of a blind man who recently declined to enter the workhouse in Manchester, and asked the guardians to procure his admission to Henshaw's workshop for the blind, where he would learn to do useful work; and seeing that this case illustrates the position of the majority of the thousands of blind persons in the country, only a few of whom are provided for in private workshops or blind asylums, whether he can take any step, by legislation or otherwise, to provide means by which the adult blind may, in State-organised workshops, become trained and self-supporting workers instead of a charge upon guardians and public charity.

MR. GLADSTONE: My attention has been called to this case, but I may point out that the question of the training and self-support of the blind is dealt with in the Report of the Royal Commission of 1889, who recommended, in Paragraph 247, that the State should not directly subsidise the work of the blind, but that it should be left to private benevolence to establish workshops for them. I understand that this recommendation has been to a considerable extent carried into effect, and I must not be taken to admit the correctness of the hon. Member's statement as to the position of the majority of blind persons in this country. I do not think the question is one for my Department, and I am not prepared to propose to my colleagues that the Government should introduce legislation.

MR. CLYNES: Does the right hon. Gentleman dispute the statement that only about 4,000 out of 30,000 blind persons in this country are provided for in workshops.

MR. GLADSTONE: I only guarded myself against accepting in full the statement of the hon. Member.

Sentences at Liverpool Assizes.

MR. CLYNES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a sentence at the Liverpool Assizes of four years penal servitude on a marine store dealer for receiving small quantities of stolen brass and metal, and to fifteen months imprisonment on a man for causing the death of a woman by a brutal attack; and whether he can cause an examination of criminal statistics to ascertain whether punishments for offences against property are heavier than for offences against persons.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I have seen a newspaper report of the first of the two cases mentioned by the hon. Member, but I have not heard of the second. In passing sentences for receiving stolen property, the Court, I believe, always considers the question whether or not the prisoner is a habitual receiver and carries on a trade which is likely to lead other persons to commit crime. In the case to which the hon. Member alludes there appears to have been evidence that the prisoner employed women and young boys to steal for him. While it is impossible to institute any exact comparison of the sentences passed for crimes against the person and against property, it is clear from the statistics that, speaking generally, crimes against the person receive the severer punishment. For instance, in 1905 there were thirty-five sentences of penal servitude for ten years or upwards passed at the Assizes and Quarter Sessions for crimes against the person and only eight for crimes against property, although crimes of the latter class were four times as numerous as those of the former.

Board of Trade Offices in Scotland.

Mr. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade how many offices the Department has in Scotland; and how many duties laid upon the Board of Trade by statute are discharged by other public departments in Scotland.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): The Board of Trade have offices for carrying out duties under the Merchant Shipping Acts at Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Greenock, and Leith. There are also offices under the same Act at various other ports of Scotland, the business being transacted with the consent of the Commissioners of Customs by customs officers who hold appointments from the Board of Trade, and there are certain other duties carried out for the Board of Trade by the coastguard, who are under the Admiralty. The registration of companies in Scotland is conducted by the King's and Lord Treasurer's remembrancer, who holds an appointment as registrar of joint-stock companies from the Board of Trade. If my hon. friend desires more detailed information on the subject I shall be happy to furnish him with it.

Third-Class Sleeping Cars on Trains.

Mr. C. E. PRICE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has made any representations to the principal railway companies of the United Kingdom and Ireland, which were promised on 26th April, 1906, as to the desirability and necessity of providing third-class sleeping accommodation upon their night trains; and, if so, with what result.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes, Sir; and the result of the communications which took place was stated in this House on 5th November last in reply to a Question asked by my hon. friend the Member for Sutherlandshire.† I am sending a copy of this reply to my hon. friend.

The Wreck of the "Berlin"—Rocket Apparatus on Ship.

Mr. A. L. LEVER (Essex, Harwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Hook of Holland is equipped with a rocket apparatus; and, if not, in view of the terrible disaster to the s.s. "Berlin," will he make representations to the Dutch authorities for the installation of such a life-saving appliance?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes, Sir. I am informed that a rocket apparatus is stationed at the Hook of Holland, but it could not be used at the wreck of the "Berlin" owing to the distance of the vessel from the shore.

Mr. LEIF JONES asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the desirability of compelling ships to carry rocket apparatus.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: That suggestion is being considered. It was put forward last week, and I have sent it to the proper authorities.

Overcrowding on the District Railway.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that, except for limited periods during the mornings and evenings, the trains on the District Railway consist, as a rule, of only three carriages; and whether he will represent to the railway company the inconvenience passengers suffer by this want of accommodation and see that all trains on this line consist of at least four carriages.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxiv., 129.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The company inform me that the loading of the trains is constantly under observation, and that some of the trains which formerly consisted of three and six cars have from the 1st instant been made four and seven-car trains respectively. The Board of Trade have no power to require that all trains should consist of at least four carriages.

Unemployment in America.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the American Report on the unemployed, in which it is stated that the average unemployment in New York State over a period of three years, including 1903, 1904, and 1905, is 17 per cent., is an official publication issued by the United States Government; whether he has any official information shewing that the percentage referred to includes persons unable to work owing to strike, lock-out, sickness, and superannuation, as well as those who are unemployed through lack of work; and whether it is due to statistics so collated that the Board of Trade issued a warning to the effect that such circumstances produce abnormally high percentages of unemployed and make the figures unsuitable for comparison with other countries.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): The American Report which I quoted is the twenty-third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labour Statistics published by the New York State Department of Labour. I am aware of the warning issued by the Board of Trade to which the hon. Member refers, but I may say that, after making every allowance for the differences between the figures for this country and those for the New York State, the fact remains that the percentage of unemployed in that State is abnormally high as compared with the percentage in this country shown in the Board of Trade Returns.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether or not the statistics of unemployed in the United States refer only to certain skilled organisations which make the Return and do not include the great body of persons employed in other trades.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Generally speaking that is true, but if these Reports did refer to the unorganised and unskilled the inference would be that the figures with regard to America would be, in my judgment, larger than I have stated.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the emigrants who have not yet been absorbed in the labour operations in the United States, and who number a million a year, are included in these Returns?

MR. JOHN BURNS: There is no evidence of that. My experience and investigation when I was in America on two different occasions showed that the statement I made the other night was perfectly correct.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): Is it not a fact that the figures of the New York State Department of labour refer to trade unionists, and therefore obviously cannot include the class referred to by the hon. Member for Gravesend?

MR. JOHN BURNS: As the hon. Member suggests, the figures of the New York State Department referred to organised men, among them skilled men, and it is a matter of regret to all statisticians that they cannot find the exact proportion of unorganised and unskilled labour in America and the unemployed.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: May we take it that the right hon. Gentleman has no statistical information whatever as to the employment of persons outside these organised trades?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Oh yes, we have, because I find from the Report quoted the other night that the working men were employed from 74 to 88 per cent. of the whole time, or reversing the figure they were idle from 12 per cent. of the time under the best conditions to 26 per cent. under the conditions prevailing in 1897, which were not so bad as those of the period 1893–6.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: Is it not a fact that in the recent meat strike and other strikes in America men have always been found to take the place of the strikers, proving a great surplus of the unemployed?

[No Answer was returned.]

Grants to Distress Committees.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will state the total amount of grants made out of the £200,000 to the various Distress Committees up to the 12th February, 1907; and the total amount of grants made from that date up to the 28th February.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The total amount paid out of the grant to the Central Unemployed Body for London and to the Distress Committees in England and Wales up to and including 12th February last was £48,255. The total amount paid from that date up to and including 28th February was £19,140. I may add that sums amounting to £20,000 were allocated to Scotland and Ireland from the grant. The allocation was made prior to 12th February.

Guardians and Service Pensions.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will recommend the various boards of guardians throughout the country to place the naval and military pensioners upon the same footing as members of friendly societies if they are compelled to apply for out-door relief, so that no portion of their pension up to and including the sum of five shillings per week should be taken into account by boards of guardians when granting outdoor relief.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Legislation would be necessary to enable boards of guardians to adopt the course desired by my hon. friend. I am, therefore, not in a position to make to them the recommendation which he suggests.

Married Women's Poor Law Liability.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he contemplates legislation to compel a married woman, with ample separate estate, to contribute towards the maintenance of her parent or parents when such parent or parents have had relief from the rates.

MR. JOHN BURNS: As I have stated in reply to previous Questions, I have taken note of this point, but I cannot promise to introduce legislation on the subject at the present time.

Sewage Pollution in the Thames.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the Port of London sanitary authority recently caused samples of Thames water to be taken at various points from Teddington to the Nore, and analysed, for the purpose of ascertaining the degree of pollution of the river within that authority's jurisdiction, and that the result of such analysis shows that at Greenhithe there is a great increase in pollution (as compared with the water above that point), due to the discharge of some 250,000,000 gallons of sewage effluent per day at Barking and Crossness outfall sewers; whether he has any official information showing that the best and latest methods of purification are adopted, and, if not, what steps he proposes should be taken to ensure this being done.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have seen a Report of the Port of London Sanitary Committee as to the matters referred to in the earlier part of the Question. The London County Council have for many years chemically treated the sewage of London, and I am informed that they are now engaged upon experiments on the most modern scientific lines, including improved purification by bacterial methods.

Members of Parliament and Post Office Appointments.

*MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): I beg to ask the Posmaster-General what, if any, are the powers and influence of a Member of Parliament with regard to Post Office appointments to sub-offices, or otherwise.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): In former times sub-postmasters were appointed on the nomination of the Member of Parliament in whose constituency the vacancy occurred; but this system was finally abolished twelve years ago, and the Postmaster-General is now solely responsible for all such appointments. Members of Parliament, as such, have no special powers or influence in the matter; I have indeed laid it down that political influence, in the ordinary sense of the term, is not to be sought by applicants for these appointments, and I understand that this rule has met with general favour from Members of this House. Of course, I give due weight to any opinions expressed by a Member of Parliament or other persons regarding the suitability or qualifications of a candidate, where that opinion is based on personal knowledge. In the case of postmasterships, salaried sub-postmasterships, and other established posts which are usually filled by persons already in the service, candidates are strictly forbidden to obtain outside influence in support of their application.

* Mr. SOARES: Then am I to understand that neither political nor social influence have any effect in regard to Post Office appointments, that the Postmaster-General is guided solely by the Reports of his own staff, and further that his sole motive by which he is guided in making these appointments is the efficiency of the public service?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think my Answer covers that point. I can assure the hon. Member that the object I have in view, as I am sure all hon. Members have, is the efficiency of the service.

Harwich and Hook of Holland Mail Contracts.

Mr. A. L. LEVER: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether any of the Post Office contracts in force with the Great Eastern Railway Company, with reference to carrying the mails between Harwich and the Hook of Holland, contain any regulations and stipulations or impose any penalties that might induce the Company to permit or unduly influence its officers to leave Harwich or enter the Hook, when by virtue of the stress of weather it would be in the interests of safety to life to delay so doing.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: There is no stipulation or condition in the contract with the Great Eastern Railway Company which could have the effect suggested by the hon. Member.

Education (Special Religious Instruction) Bill.

Mr. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what will be the estimated annual cost to the managers of Church of England Schools in respect of the Education (Special Religious Instruction) Bill.

Mr. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Education what is the total estimated sum for which managers of non-provided schools are liable, during the present financial year, in respect of special religious instruction given by teachers in those schools.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): In reply to these Questions, I must refer to the Answer I gave to a similar Question yesterday†.

Religious Instruction in Schools.

Mr. CARLILE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what is the basis of his estimate that the proportion of time occupied in giving special religious instruction in non-provided schools amounts to one-fifteenth of the whole occupation of the teacher.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): May I also ask the President of the Board of Education what portion of the religious teaching in Church of England schools is, on the average, devoted to denominational instruction?

Mr. McKENNA: In estimating the proportion of time occupied in giving special religious instruction as one-fifteenth of the whole occupation of the teacher, regard has been had to the time spent in giving special religious instruction as compared with the time spent both in giving other instruction and in preparing lessons out of school hours. I must add that I do not think it is in the public interest to enter upon any argumentative defence or explanation of provisions in the Bill by means of Question and Answer, which can better be dealt with in Committee of the House.

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† See Col. 479.

Secular Instruction.

LORD R. CECIL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the secular instruction given in non-provided schools differs in subjects or otherwise from that given in provided schools.

MR. McKENNA: I have no reason to suppose that the secular instruction given in provided schools taken as a class differs from that given in non-provided schools taken as a class, but I have no doubt that, in the case of particular schools, differences may be found.

West Riding *v.* Attorney-General.

MR. CLOUGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, whether he will supply each Member of this House with a copy of the transcript of the shorthand notes of the judgments of the Master of the Rolls and Lord Justices Fletcher Moulton and Farwell, delivered in the Court of Appeal, West Riding *v.* Attorney-General, on 8th August, 1906.

MR. McKENNA: I will lay upon the Table a copy of the transcript of the shorthand notes of the judgments delivered in the Divisional Court, the Court of Appeal, and the House of Lords.

Dividing Societies.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention has been directed to the fact that a large number of friendly societies exist, registered and unregistered, which are conducted on the dividing principle, and which, while they give their members no real assurance of future benefit, in many cases lead them to believe that such assurance actually exists; and if he can see his way to compel such dividing societies either to register in a special class or to frame such a scale of contributions as shall assure benefits.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I am informed that there is no reason to suppose that dividing societies hold out fallacious hopes to their members any more than other friendly societies or joint stock companies. Indeed the fact that a society divides the funds should be sufficient evidence to an intelligent man that its main object is to provide for no more than immediate needs and that he is not likely to have the additional security of accumulated funds. As regards the proposals of my hon. friend, the system of compelling societies to have approved scales of contributions existed under the Friendly Societies Act of 1829 but proved a failure and was repealed in 1834. It could of course be only enforced in the case of registered societies and would serve as a deterrent to registration. Registration is not at present compulsory and it would therefore be impossible to enforce registration in a special class. Moreover I understand that such a regulation would not prove any check upon the evil if it exists.

Customs Revenue for Imports.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can make such arrangements for the current year 1907 as will show the values of imports into the United Kingdom from foreign countries, and, separately, from the Colonies and India, also the items of revenue derived therefrom by Customs duties.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The values of the principal articles imported into the United Kingdom from foreign countries India, and British Possessions, are shown in the volumes of the Annual Statement of Trade, and will be published as usual for 1907. I am informed that it is not possible without incurring much expense to make arrangements to give separately for 1907 the amounts of revenue derived from Customs duties on articles imported from foreign countries, India, and the Colonies, and the compilation of such statistics for subsequent years would involve a large amount of additional work and necessitate a considerable increase in the staff of the statistical department. I do not think the result to be obtained warrants the expenditure.

Scottish Rights-of-Way.

MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to the resolution of the Dunkeld Parish Council, passed on Saturday, 23rd February, to remove from its right-of-way notice boards the fact that they were officially erected, and also to the discussion at the council by which it was indicated that this might be the first step to removal of the boards altogether; and whether, in view of the frequent attempts now being made to close these rights-of-way and ancient privileges of access to historical objects, mountain tops, etc., in Scotland, he can inform the House whether any legislation on the subject is contemplated.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): My attention has been drawn to the proceedings referred to, and I regret that anything should have occurred to revive local feeling upon this subject. I understand there is no intention to remove the boards which indicate the road in question. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, I have no power to interfere in this matter with the discretion of the parish council. In putting up notice boards the parish council is only exercising its statutory rights. The desire to preserve to the public all existing rights-of-way has the hearty sympathy of His Majesty's Government, but I cannot give any undertaking now as to future legislation.

Ballymacarberry Game Prosecution.

MR. POWER: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to a case recently heard at the Ballymacarberry petty sessions, county Waterford, where a tenant on Lord Ashtown's property was prosecuted for killing game; that it was deposed by a witness that he saw one of Lord Ashtown's keepers, named Robert Dunne, setting a snare or trap, and putting a dead pheasant in the snare; that it was further deposed by Mr. Nugent, whose father was the chairman of the Waterford County Council, that, on examining the pheasant, seven shots were found lodged in the body of the pheasant; and whether, as the prosecution sought to prove that the pheasant had been snared, inquiries will be made to sift this case, and to institute proceedings for perjury if it appears that the keeper did place the pheasant in the snare.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange): The case referred to was a private prosecution by Lord Ashtown, with which the Government had nothing to do. I gather from a newspaper report of the proceedings which has been furnished to me, that there was a conflict of evidence between the witnesses for the prosecution and those for the defence. The Bench was divided in opinion, but the majority of the magistrates were in favour of the defendant, and the case was accordingly dismissed. It is open to the defendant to institute proceedings for perjury, if he is so advised, or he may commence a civil action against the prosecutor, but I do not think the interference of the Executive is in any way called for.

MR. POWER: As the magistrate's clerk took the evidence down in longhand, will the right hon. Gentleman get a copy of it?

MR. CHERRY: Yes.

Ballinahouna Farm Sale.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a full police report concerning the proposed sale by a Mrs. Bradley, of Ballinahouna, of the interest in a farm which was advertised for auction in Galway on 17th December, 1906, and again on 25th January, 1907; and whether he has been informed that a grave was dug close to the public road on 8th December, and that a threatening notice was posted on 9th December; and whether he can state if there were any bidders at the adjourned sale.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I have received a police report to the effect stated in the Question. I am informed that there were no bidders at the sale on the first occasion, but at the adjourned sale the tenant's interest was purchased by the landlord.

Lord Ashtown and his Tenants.

MR. POWER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners are aware that Lord Ashtown has recently bought two estates in the county Waterford, and that he refuses to sell his own estate to the tenants, and issued writs against seven of his tenants who went as a deputation and asked him to open negotiations for sale to the tenants, and compelled them to pay the hanging gale, which has run for over fifty years; whether Lord Ashtown also competed with the Estates Commissioners in county Galway for the purchase of untenanted lands from the Land Judge, so as to prevent the congestion in the locality from being relieved; and whether the action of such landlords as Lord Ashtown will be considered in framing any amending Land Bill.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have no knowledge of the purchase by Lord Ashtown of any estates in county Waterford, or of any proceedings for the recovery of rent which he may have instituted against his tenants. It is the case that Lord Ashtown made an offer to the Land Judge for the purchase of an estate in county Galway of which the Estates Commissioners eventually became the purchasers. This offer, however, was made long prior to the Estates Commissioners' offer, and Lord Ashtown can therefore scarcely be said to have competed with the Commissioners for the purchase. I am not at present in a position to make any statement as to the possibility of amending legislation on the subject of Irish land.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): Is it not the fact that Lord Ashtown previously bought two properties over the heads of the tenants? Is he not a centre of disturbance in Galway?

[No Answer was returned.]

Kilkenny Magistrates.

MR. MEAGHER (Kilkenny, N): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the demand for the appointment of magistrates in the several districts in North Kilkenny; and whether the Lord Chancellor of Ireland has received resolutions from the public bodies in that constituency recommending the names of several gentlemen for appointment; and if so, will he say what steps the Lord Chancellor has taken to meet the wishes of the public bodies concerned.

MR. BIRRELL: The Lord Chancellor informs me that he has received representations in favour of the appointment of a number of gentlemen to the magistracy for county Kilkenny and has submitted to the Lieutenant of the county the names of those whom, after inquiry, he considered to be best qualified for appointment. The Lieutenant has the matter at present under consideration.

MR. MEAGHER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that while 95 per cent. of the population are Nationalists, 75 per cent. of the magistrates are Tories? Will the recommendation of public bodies on this matter have attention? Is this the sort of Home Rule we are to get?

Report of Viceregal Commission on Poor Law Reform.

MR. MEAGHER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received resolutions from the different Poor Law unions in county Kilkenny approving of the recommendations of the Viceregal Commission on Poor Law reform; and whether, in view of the approbation which the said Report has received all over Ireland, he will see his way to have effect given to the Report of the Commission at an early date.

MR. BIRRELL: Resolutions to the effect mentioned have been received. As my predecessor informed hon. Members last session, the Government deem it necessary to consider carefully the Commissioners' recommendations as a whole before undertaking the necessary legislation to give effect to them. This will occupy a considerable time, and I am, therefore, not in a position to make any definite statement in the matter.

Evicted Tenants.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners will supply a Return giving the names of the applicants whose claims as evicted tenants have been set aside, and the reasons for so doing in each case.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners think it premature at present to furnish a Return of the evicted tenants whose claims for reinstatement have been rejected. When all the applications have been inquired into, the Commissioners will consider the feasibility of preparing a Return showing the names and the reasons for rejection.

Skibbereen Magistrate.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if Matthew Flanagan, of Skibbereen, has been appointed a magistrate; and, if so, on whose recommendation; if he is aware that there is a judgment for £300 and costs outstanding against this gentleman since 1905 at the suit of Lizzie O'Driscoll, in respect of which the sheriff made a seizure and returned *nulla bona*, and that there is also an order in force against him under the Debtors (Ireland) Act, 1872, for payment of this sum by instalments, and if £250 is still due; is he aware that this man is an assistant in a drapery shop in Skibbereen and is a member of the United Irish League; and will he state if these facts were within the knowledge of the Lord-Chancellor of Ireland at the date of making the appointment, and what action he proposes to take.

MR. EDWARD BARRY (Cork County, S.): Was not this an appointment made by the Lord-Lieutenant of the County, and did not the local public bodies protest against it?

MR. BIRRELL: I have referred this Question to the Lord-Chancellor, who informs me that steps for the appointment of Mr. Flanagan as a magistrate were being taken, when the fact came to his notice that a judgment against Mr. Flanagan for breach of promise of marriage remained unsatisfied, whereupon the Lord-Chancellor stayed the issue of the Commission. Mr. Flanagan is manager to an important local firm, and apart from the circumstance before mentioned, the information received by the Lord-Chancellor was entirely favourable to Mr. Flanagan, and does not bear out the statements contained in the Question.

Roscommon Untenanted Land.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Congested Districts Board have decided not to enter into negotiation for the further purchase of untenanted land in county Roscommon, pending the Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion; can he state on what date this decision was arrived at, and by whom; if by a meeting of the Board, can he state who were present on the occasion, the reason for this decision, whether it is intended to confine this policy to the county Roscommon or to extend it to other districts in Ireland; and whether, in view of the fact that in the county of Roscommon there are over 100,000 acres of untenanted grass lands, and the urgency and importance of expediting its acquisition for distribution, he will have this decision at once reconsidered, and at the same time communicate with the Secretary of the Royal Commission to expedite the issue of its Report.

MR. BIRRELL: A short paragraph contained in my Answer to the hon. Member's non-oral Question of 26th February has led to some misapprehension.† The statement that the Congested Districts Board are not negotiating for further purchases is not of general application, but applied to the case of particular estates in county Roscommon which have been offered for sale to the Board, the negotiations for the purchase of which have been postponed for the present. The Board are still prepared to purchase estates which are specially suitable for their purposes, and, as a matter of fact, have recently purchased such property, and are negotiating for further purchases. The Government are most anxious that the Report of the Royal Commission should be presented as soon as possible, but a considerable quantity of evidence remains to be taken, and it is impossible at present to say when the Report can be issued.

Telegraph Office for Aghnacliffe.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General what is the cause of the delay in extending the telegraph line from Dring post office to

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1416.

Aghnacliffe, for which a signed guarantee has been sent to his Department.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The guarantee has now been signed, and the extension will be proceeded with as quickly as possible, but there are certain statutory formalities to be gone through before the actual work can be begun.

Telegraph Office for Lanesborough.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will consent to extend the present telegraph service either from Kenagh or Killashee to Lanesborough, where a weekly market and several important fairs are held.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have offered a telegraph office at Lanesborough under guarantee, and a draft deed has been forwarded for consideration.

Lanesborough Postal Arrangements.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the grounds upon which a Sunday delivery of letters to Lanesborough was discontinued; whether he is aware that fully 3,000 people are served by this office; and will he now direct that the service be resumed.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not quite understand the hon. Member's Question, as there has never been a Sunday service to Lanesborough, and I find that the circumstances are not such as would justify me in instituting such a service.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: The right hon. Gentleman's information is wrong; there has been a Sunday delivery.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Well, I have given the hon. Member the information I have received.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: It is not true.

Visit of the Colonial Premiers.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will take steps to invite the Prime Ministers of the Empire, notably Canada, Australia, the Cape, and New Zealand, to address the House of Commons, from the Bar, or in the Chamber itself, on the questions affecting our relations with the Colonies and India, with a view of cementing Imperial union.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The Colonial Conference has been convened in order to give opportunity for the discussion of questions affecting Imperial interests on the lines of and following the precedent of former Conferences; and it is not possible or expedient to suggest to the Prime Ministers that they should adopt a course which would be entirely novel and contrary to all precedent as well as to the usages of the House of Commons.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

George Birnie Esslemont, esquire, for the Parliamentary Burgh of Aberdeen, South Division.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Maddison and Mr. Cathcart Wason (added in respect of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill); and had appointed in substitution: Mr. W. E. Harvey and Mr. Stephen Collins (in respect of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill: Mr. Lough, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Wilkie, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Barnes, Mr. McCrae, Mr. Halley Stewart, Sir Henry Craik, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Tyson Wilson, Sir William Collins, Mr. James Mason, and Mr. Bridgeman.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

HOURS OF LABOUR (BAKEHOUSES) BILL.

"To restrict the Hours of Labour in Bakehouses to forty-eight hours per week," presented by Mr. Wilkie; supported by Mr. Steadman, Mr. Gill, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Bell, Mr. Barnes, Mr James Haslam, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Thorne; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed. [Bill 93.]

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN BILL.

"To amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904," presented by Mr. Bramsdon; supported by Mr. Cave, Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Luke White, Sir Henry Craik, Mr. Godfrey Baring, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Courthope, Mr. Maclean, and Mr. Barrie; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 94.]

FEUS AND BUILDING LEASES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Feus and Leases for Building in Scotland," presented by Mr. Findlay; supported by Sir Andrew Torrance, Mr. Beale, Mr. Hodge, Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Mr. Menzies, and Mr. Eugene Wason; to be read a second time upon Friday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 95.]

JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.

"To provide for the abolition of two Judgeships of the High Court in Ireland, and to reduce the Salary of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Birrell; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 96.]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That Mr. Holden be discharged from the Public Accounts Committee.

Ordered, That Sir Robert Hobart be added.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

HOUSE OF COMMONS (KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS).

Ordered, That Sir Robert Hobart be discharged from the Kitchen and Refreshment Committee.

Ordered, "That Mr. Osmond Williams be added."—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

SUPPLY (NAVY ESTIMATES).

Order for Committee read.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): I am sure that I shall be consulting the convenience of the House if I address myself without preamble, and without prolixity to the leading points in the Navy Estimates. The first of these I think is finance. The financial situation is somewhat complicated and difficult. The dominant factor is, of course, the abandonment of the system of raising money for naval works by means of loans. The fact is that there are to be no more Loans Acts passed. But, in the first place, our unexhausted borrowing powers will be used as far as they will go; secondly, beyond that point the loans works, meaning by that the works sanctioned by statute, will be put upon the Estimates; and, thirdly, the Estimates will bear, as now, the special annuities in repayment of loans. As to the borrowing powers, according to the last Estimate there will be on 1st April unexhausted borrowing powers amounting to £1,916,000, of which about £1,478,000 will be spent mainly in completing works already authorised, and the balance will be spent in the following year. The total Estimates of the loans works to 31st March amounted to £32,206,933. We have reduced that to £29,840,000. Deducting £27,593,000, which will all be used, there is left a balance of £2,246,180 for the ordinary purposes of the Navy Estimates, and of that amount £977,091 will be spent in 1907–8. The amount of the special annuity in repayment of loans will be £1,214,000 this year. In the following year it will be approximately £1,300,000.

I have a twofold purpose in giving the House these figures—first, to explain the change, and, secondly, to deduce the true amount of the reduction in the figures. On the face of it, the Estimates only show a net reduction of £450,000. If we add the naval works, transferred from loans to the Estimates, that makes £1,000,000 more. But besides that there are certain automatic increases to be considered. I called the attention of the House last year to the automatic increases, and I think it is only fair, in comparing this year's Estimates with last year's, that they should be taken into account.

For instance, there are the automatic increases, due to transactions which have taken place in the past, over which we have no control and which we must meet. The increase in the special annuities will be £120,000, the increase due to the incidence of the Cunard subsidy will be £90,000, the increase due to pensions for officers and men will be £39,000, and the increase in ordinary pay will be £140,000. All these are inevitable automatic increases. The amount of the whole will be £389,000. I think I may be allowed to allude to the fact that this year, as compared with last year, we suffer by not having the sum obtained from the sales of old ships and stores that was available last year—namely, £135,000—by all these automatic increases, and by the falling off of appropriations in aid. All of that implies a saving in other Votes. Adding these savings to the normal reduction of £450,000, I arrive at the total reduction, as compared with last year's Estimates, of nearly £2,000,000.

But there is another point of view from which I should like to approach naval expenditure. I think the House ought to be told every year what is the gross aggregate amount of money of all kinds that it is proposed to spend on the naval service in the coming year. The calculation I made is founded on this principle. I take the gross Estimates, including the appropriations in aid, the expenditure on loans for naval services and on other Votes, and I deduct, as I am bound to do, the amount of the annuity which has already been spent. The gross aggregate expenditure on this account last year was £36,000,000. The corresponding figures for the present year, calculated on the same basis, is £33,500,000. I may be permitted to go one step further. Three years ago the House was asked for £42,600,000. That is comparing Estimate with Estimate. I ought, however, to say that the expenditure on loans in that year did not reach by a million the estimated sum. Allowing for that, the real reduction, compared with three years ago, is £8,000,000. I will add a word about the special annuity. This year, as I have said, it amounts to £1,214,000, and next year it will be more. The time is coming when we shall cease all further borrowing of money, but the Navy Estimates will bear a dead weight of over £1,250,000 annually on account of past expenditure unless these payments are transferred to the National Debt. It is immaterial to the country how the money is paid, but in comparing the Navy Estimate for this year with other years it gives a distorted view of the cost if the current Estimates are burdened with a large sum expended in former years. To sum up, the net result is that we have a nominal reduction of £500,000 and, according to my calculation, we have an actual reduction of £1,500,000; and we have a real saving of about £2,000,000.

The House will ask, where has this saving been? It has taken place in Votes 8 and 9, in the new construction part of those Votes. Taking the provision for new construction in Vote 8 and adding the corresponding provision in Vote 9, the total of these figures in last year's Estimates was £10,859,500. In the present year's Estimates the total is only £9,227,000. The reduction on this head amounts, according to my figures, to £1,632,500. It is nearly nine years since the provision for new construction in the Navy Estimates was so low as it is this year. Inasmuch as these reductions relate to new construction, and new construction carries with it all other Votes in the long run, if these reductions can only be maintained they give promise of other reductions in the future, and we hope to see, not automatic increases, but automatic decreases. That brings me to the second head on which I wish to address the House, and that is shipbuilding, and more particularly the new programme which we are proposing for the coming year. That is an old story which was given away by myself in the month of July last year. I do not think it is necessary to dwell on it. The main fact is that we are going to add two Dreadnoughts and possibly three; one fast unarmoured cruiser, five ocean-going destroyers, twelve first-class torpedo-boats, and twelve submarine boats. It is usual for the House not to dwell on Vote 8 at this period of the session, but to postpone that Vote until a later period of the session. May I say that I hope an opportunity will be given to Members of the House to see for themselves the existing Dreadnought and several other vessels in which they may be interested in connection with a forthcoming visit of the Colonial Premiers. The Colonial Premiers will go to Portsmouth on Friday, 3rd May, to make their inspection, and we hope a large number of Members of this House will accompany them.

Although it is usual to postpone discussion upon details at this stage, there is one governing question I have no wish to evade. It may fairly be asked, "Is your provision adequate?" Or, to put it in the usual formula, "Are we maintaining the two-Power standard?" I have watched the growth of the two-Power standard for a great many years. Originally the two-Power standard meant two specified European Powers. It was not a standard in the abstract—a mere chimera *bombinans in vacuo*—it was a concrete thing; but at the best it was only a rule of thumb—a a rough and ready test. There may be conceivable circumstances in which a two-Power standard might be too much, and there may be imaginable circumstances in which a three-Power standard would be too little. What the standard should be is, in its essence, a political question, not a Party question, but a question for Parliaments. Whether a given standard is maintained is not a political, but a scientific, technical, and naval question upon which the Admiralty of the day may justly claim to have a conclusive voice. I am here on the part of the Admiralty to say that, in their opinion, the two-Power standard will be adequately maintained with the programme of shipbuilding which we are bringing forward to-day. Knowing that this is a delicate subject, perhaps I ought to stop here. It is one of the embarrassments of my position that I cannot say exactly what I know or think. There is always great danger of misunderstanding at home and still greater danger of misapprehension abroad. Therefore I have to be cautious. Bearing in mind these things, I may, I think, allude to one or two points not by way of argument, but by way of illustration. Let any hon. Member arrange the fleet of France and Germany alongside the fleets of Great Britain. I take France and Germany because that is the most uninvidious combination that can be made. I invite you to do that, having regard to the age, the size, the armaments, and numbers; and if you play that little *Kriegspiel*, I think you will come to the conclusion that I have—namely, that in respect of battleships we have a well-assured superiority over the two, and in respect of cruisers we have a still greater superiority. I would strongly recommend those who have not already done so to read the articles contributed to *The Times* newspaper recently by a distinguished friend and former colleague of mine, Sir William White, the late Chief Constructor to the Admiralty, a man whose authority on this subject is almost without rival. I would direct special attention to his estimates of the value of our warship building capacities, both public and private. Another point of illustration I have derived from a Return giving the expenditure on new construction of all the great naval Powers for the last ten years. The two-Power standard ceases to be applicable. For instance, France and Germany together are a long way below the United Kingdom, so I have thrown in a third European Power which used to be almost a leading Power—namely, Russia. This is the result. In ten years, France, Russia and Germany all put together have added by new construction to their navy tonnage to the extent of 1,108,280; Great Britain in the same period added 1,132,205 tons. This is what some people call "a cheap Navy." So it is. It is cheaper than any other navy. Taking the figures given in the Thomasson Return, we find that, while Russia built her new construction at a cost of £93 5s. per ton, Germany at a cost of £97 8s., and France at a cost of £124 6s. per ton, Great Britain pays only £88 per ton. In that sense we have a cheap Navy. It might be said, "That is all very well for old-type ships, but you are forgetting the 'Dreadnought.'" I will meet that point in this way. Take as new types the "Dreadnought" and her contemporaries—those ships still on the stocks—the two "Lord Nelsons" and the three "Invincibles," and as old ships all ships before the "Dreadnought." As regards old ships, there is no difference of opinion that we have a superiority over France and Germany combined. Neither France nor Germany possess the equal of any one of our eight "King Edward" class or our six "Warrior" cruisers. As to new types, we have one "Dreadnought" ready, a "Lord Nelson" and her sister ship, the "Agamemnon," completing, three "Dreadnoughts" laid down, and three "Invincibles" building. That is our programme. Against that neither France nor Germany have yet laid the keel of a single ship corresponding to these. Two years from now—namely, in the spring of 1909—the situation as regards completed ships of the new type will be this: We shall have completed six battleships and three cruisers—that is to say, two "Lord Nelsons," four "Dreadnoughts," and three "Invincibles." At that date neither France nor Germany will have a single ship completed. In the autumn of 1909 we shall still have completed our six battleships and three cruisers; France will still have none of the new type, and Germany will have two battleships and one cruiser. In the autumn of 1910 we shall have eight, or, it may be, nine, battleships completed and afloat, and three cruisers. France will only have completed two battleships; Germany will have completed four battleships and two cruisers. So that I think hon. Members who are nervous about the two-Power standard may possess their souls in patience for the next three and a half years. Bearing in mind our capacity for output, I may say that if unforeseen developments should arise abroad which would require renewed efforts on our part, I have no doubt the Admiralty will deal with the situation with prudence, courage, and common sense.

The only other subject upon which I wish to say a few words is still more delicate—it is the constitution of the Home Fleet. I cannot ignore the rancorous Press campaign which raged for a time against the Home Fleet; but the less said about it the better. This is almost the first occasion on which the distribution of the Fleet has engaged the attention of Parliament. I remember one other occasion, and that was at the time of the Mediterranean scare. The right hon. Gentlemen opposite were in office when that scare was engineered by very nearly the same people, or the same sort of people, as are engaged in this campaign against us. Speaking on behalf of the Liberal Opposition of that day, I declined emphatically to take any part in the attempt then made to wrest from the Admiralty the disposition and control of His Majesty's ships. Lord Selborne also in another place spoke in the same sense. In effect he said that if Parliament or the Press proposed to tie the hands of the Admiralty in distributing His Majesty's ships, he for one would cease to be responsible for the Navy. I hope it will not be considered unbecoming of me to express the great satisfaction and pleasure I have felt at the patriotic attitude adopted by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, especially by those who have been responsible for naval administration in the past. The Home Fleet as now composed is in effect the culmination of a long series of the dealings with redistribution in the Navy. I will ask the House to follow me in attempting to trace its genesis—in considering what I believe are the three stages in its evolution. We must carry our minds back first of all to the period previous to 1904. The second stage is that of the great reforms introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite in 1904; and the third stage is the present. What was the state of things before 1904, again thinking of battleships? The British Navy fell then into two categories, one consisting of ships in commission and the other of ships in reserve. The ships in commission had full crews, those in reserve had no crews at all. The ships in commission were scattered over the great outlying fleets and in considerable numbers. The China Fleet had five battleships. The ships in reserve were either the dockyard reserve, which means ships undergoing repairs and not nearly ready for use, or ships in reserve which were in practice nearly ready for use, but which, in point of fact, were never used. Then, in 1904, came the great changes introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I will not go into them in detail, but the essence of the thing was that ships fell into two categories. There were the ships in full commission scattered over the great outlying fleets—still five battleships in China—and with full crews. The second category consisted of ships in commission in reserve, divided into three divisions over the three ports, having some new features of remarkable importance and strength. First of all, the nucleus-crew system was introduced; that meant putting ships in reserve with two-fifths of the ordinary crew. The second element, which led directly to the new proposals, was the emergency battleships and cruisers, of which the *personnel* had been fully provided. There were two battleships or cruisers in each of the three ports. Then there was the concentration at home, and the special reserve. I am told that in 1904 the Admiralty came to the conclusion that the strength of the sea-going fleets was greater than strategical necessities required. Under the system established by the great reforms of 1904, however, when the Atlantic and Channel Fleets were away from home, there were no fully-manned ships in home waters. The great developments which the Admiralty have made during the last six months have been fully described in the memorandum submitted by my noble friend the First Lord of the Admiralty. The great outlying fleets will be reduced in strength, not below what they ought to be, but below what they have been up to the present. The China battleship fleet was brought home a short time ago. Having in hand these redundant vessels of the larger fleets, and having ships in commission in reserve, what the Admiralty has done is to amalgamate the remaining divisions into one home division—an amalgamation of all the forces not engaged in the sea-going fleets into one whole. There is the Nore division, consisting of six battleships, six cruisers, forty-eight destroyers, and all the attendant small craft, fully manned. Then those which are not fully manned, and which remain at Portsmouth and Devonport under the nucleus-crew system, will have their crews strengthened. In some of the ships the nucleus will be raised from two-fifths to three-fifths, and there will be a supply on a sliding scale of nucleus crews. Then, instead of the special reserve ships, which were of very doubtful utility, provision is made that special-service ships, meaning thereby ships available in time of war for special duties, shall be ready at four days notice if required.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Is the right hon. Gentleman referring to the "Royal Sovereign" class?

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Yes, that class would be included, no doubt. This new category of vessels for special service takes the place of what was called the special reserve. I submit that the whole of these proposals are the logical development and consequence of the great change that took place in 1904. I have been giving a history of the facts which led up to the constitution of the Home Fleet, and I must show the House its future. We are dealing only with the first phase of the Home Fleet. There are other phases, and I am informed by the responsible officers that the organisation of the Home Fleet will not be complete until May, 1908. So that is only the first stage of the Home Fleet. I submit on that statement the House would be satisfied that the constitution of the Home Fleet is not proposed by us, but that it follows not only in chronological, but also in logical, sequence upon the reforms which took place in 1904. At all events it is put forward by the Admiralty as being, in their opinion, the best for the redistribution of ships and men in the Navy. The chief feature, obviously, is the concentration of strength in home waters, and its chief result will be the additional security of the people of these islands against what I believe is their only danger, and that, I hope, not a serious one, viz., that of sudden raid. It may be an imaginary danger, but I would not enter on that question; still, whether imaginary or not, I think the people of these islands have some right to consideration on that point. I will only add that the other fleets are not reduced, in the opinion of the Admiralty advisers, below the strength proper to the situation at the present moment. The Channel Fleet, in particular, I am told, is essentially stronger than it has been since 1905. Speaking generally, all the fleets will be kept up to strength by the system of reliefs which will be established from the ships of the Home Fleet. It was argued at one time, with a certain show of force, that by moving a certain number of battleships and cruisers from what are called the sea-going fleets, and putting them into the Home Fleet, we were reducing what is called the sea-time—the amount of time of the fleet in practice at sea. As to that I have been careful to obtain correct official figures. I asked my advisers for a comparison between the sea-time of the Home Fleet and that of the other fleets, at the present time and some years ago; and also, if possible, between the sea-time of our own fleet and that of a foreign fleet. I am told that a typical sea-going fleet, like the Mediterranean Fleet, now spends about 40 per cent.

more time at sea than it did six years ago. That is proved by the actual hours under way. The Home Fleet, including the nucleus-crew ships, will now be at sea about 70 per cent. of the time spent at sea by the sea-going fleets; therefore their sea service will be on a par with that of the sea-going fleets six years ago. Although a certain number of vessels have been withdrawn from the Channel, Mediterranean, and Atlantic Fleets and attached to the Home Fleet, yet on the whole the work of both officers and men at sea has increased. The large number of men formerly in the barracks and training establishments, who get no sea work at all, have now been put into the Home Fleet, where they will get 70 per cent. of the sea work to be got in the other fleets. A comparison may be made with a foreign navy. I have taken one, the name of which, however, I prefer not to give. The result is that their sea-time stands to ours as one to 3·25. That, I think, is a sufficient answer to the apprehension that we are ruining the Navy by establishing a Home Fleet. The only other criticism which seems to have had any effect on the public mind is one by which it is implied that it is to be an insufficient and undermanned Home Fleet. The idea seems to be that all the ships and men of the Navy should be engaged in constant sea practice in the same way as the sea-going fleet. If all the ships of the Navy were fully manned, in order to have the same amount of sea practice as the sea-going fleet, that would mean an addition to the Navy Estimates of £4,000,000 a year. It has also been represented that we are making these changes in order to cheapen the Navy. I wish I could give the House an assurance that there will be savings. I hope there may be some, but I fear they will not be considerable. At any rate I have not been able to get any reliable figures as to the probable financial result of the changes which we propose. I have now explained the finances of the Navy, the shipbuilding programme, and the distribution of the Fleet, the three matters which govern naval policy; and I have only to thank the House for the kind indulgence with which it has heard me.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Mr. Edmund Robertson.

*Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) said he did not propose to go into detail with regard to the financial aspect of the question, because the late Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able to deal with it more completely. The right hon. Gentleman had taken credit for the fact that the Shipbuilding Vote, which practically determined the magnitude of the rest of the Estimates, now stood lower than it had done at any time during the last nine years. But he had altogether left out of account the abnormal good fortune which the Government had enjoyed from the practical suspension of foreign shipbuilding programmes through causes which were well known to the right hon. Gentleman, and which could not be expected to be permanent. He was most anxious to avoid anything like Party or captious criticism, but there were certain portions of the Government policy which it was difficult to understand, which had not yet been clearly explained, and which in the absence of further explanation were bound to call forth severe criticism from many quarters. He did not propose on this occasion to deal with two most important questions, namely, naval works and the abrupt termination of the system of building under loans and the shipbuilding programme. Those were points which would be dealt with better on Vote 10 and on the Shipbuilding Vote itself later on in the session. Often the estimates of the Government at this period did not agree with what was actually proposed in the Shipbuilding Vote, and so he would reserve his detailed criticism upon those points. Speaking generally, however, the programme agreed with what was forecast last year. The Opposition made their protest then against the reduction from the Cawdor standard, and it was useless for him to repeat that protest. But since then a new fact had arisen in the loss of the "Montagu." At the time the Shipbuilding Vote was introduced last year there were hopes that that vessel would be saved, but they now knew that it had been lost, and therefore the Government had really sanctioned the striking off of two battleships from the shipbuilding programme, because in the normal case the "Montagu" would have to be replaced.

It was very fortunate that the right hon. Gentleman had been able to give the House definite information with regard to the state of foreign shipbuilding programmes, which had been so unexpectedly delayed. The late Admiralty Board had been attacked because they invented the "Dreadnought," but it was mainly owing to that invention that the right hon. Gentleman had been able this year to reduce his programme, because it had caused other countries to stand still until they had made up their minds as to the best type of ship. That had perhaps justified the Admiralty in temporarily slackening their shipbuilding programme, but it was only a temporary delay on the part of foreign nations, who would now be straining every nerve to make up for lost time. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the new building programme was dependent to the extent of 33⅓ per cent. upon the decisions of The Hague Conference. Did the Government seriously believe that there was any reasonable probability or possibility of our naval rivals being attracted by the bait which the Government was holding out to them? Surely they had already made sufficient sacrifices on the altar of peace and economy by cutting out two battleships, including the non-replaced "Montagu," and by reducing the Regular Army by over 16,000 men. Really it was getting very difficult to know where The Hague Conference and the enthusiasm of the Prime Minister was leading them. It was apparently leading to unfortunate misunderstandings with both friends and acquaintances, and there were no signs whatever that the policy was leading them in the direction so earnestly desired by the Prime Minister and Mr. Stead. The Prime Minister had just published in *The Nation* a remarkable manifesto upon our naval policy and its innocent motives. His remarks did not seem to have met with that hearty sympathy of foreign countries which, no doubt, the right hon. Gentleman anticipated. They had been received with ill-concealed anxiety in France and open irritation in Germany. Alluding to the naval strength of this country the Prime Minister wrote—

> "We have already given earnest of our sincerity by the considerable reductions that have been effected in our naval and military expenditure. . . . It has, however, been suggested that our example will count for nothing, because our preponderant naval position will still remain unimpaired. I do not believe it. The sea power of this country implies no challenge to any single State or group of States. I am persuaded that throughout the world that power is recognised as non-aggressive, and innocent of designs against the independence, the commercial freedom, and the legitimate development of other States, and that it is, therefore, a mistake to imagine that the naval Powers will be disposed to regard our position on the sea as a bar to any proposal for the arrest of armaments."

And he concluded by saying—

> "If our Fleets be invulnerable, they carry with them no menace across the waters of the world, but a message of the most cordial goodwill."

[MINISTERIAL cheers.] Yes, but those were the sentiments of all countries who believed in sea power, for themselves. He would also like to quote what the semi-official *Cologne Gazette* said on this subject on 3rd June, 1906—

> "The German Fleet offers no danger of aggression to France or England, and it is clear that the considerations which admit of reduction in English naval armaments do not hold good for us in an equal measure."

It was always the interests of peace that the right hon. Gentleman, and those who thought with him, had in view. And so it was with our naval rivals, as illustrated by the telegram sent by the German Navy League to the German Emperor, in May of last year. It ran—

> "May the development of our Fleet soon make such progress that peace, towards the preservation of which your Majesty's efforts are continually directed, may continue to be assured."

That showed, at any rate, that the right hon. Gentleman and our foreign rivals in the matter of shipbuilding were proceeding upon the same lines towards the attainment of the same object, viz., peace. But, after all, what was more important was the view of the Government as to the standard of strength we ought to maintain. The Prime Minister had referred to the "preponderating naval position of this country on the sea," and our "paramount position." But those were vague generalities, and what they were entitled to know was what was the official definition of the strength considered necessary for us to maintain. That ought to be expressed in terms which could easily be understood by the people of this country and abroad. For the past eighteen years they were supposed to have maintained the two-Power standard, and by that it had always been understood they meant superiority over the joint navies of any two-Powers. There was an admirable definition of it in the Amendment put down by the hon. Member for King's Lynn. He hoped that Amendment would be pressed to a division if no assurance was given on the subject by the Government. That view of the two-Power standard was never challenged by any Party or Government in this House until last July. The Prime Minister himself held the view up to a short time ago that our Navy should be equal to that of any two other Powers. In a speech which the right hon. Gentleman made a few years ago he said that—

> "He accepted the doctrine that our Fleet should equal any other two Fleets in the world."

But that was not what the Secretary to the Admiralty had said to-day, nor was it what the Prime Minister said in July last. The right hon. Gentleman used language then which caused considerable anxiety among the friends of the Navy. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "When you talk of the two-Power standard, after all you cannot keep out of your mind who the two Powers are."

and he added—

> "I do not object to the two-Power standard as a rough guide, but this is a two-Power standard of almost a preposterous kind."

That was in complete contradiction of his previous utterance on the subject. It was an entirely new definition of the two-Power standard, and introduced into it the fatal elements of uncertainty, fluctuation, and dependence on diplomacy. He hoped that the Government would find it possible to make a definite declaration that they would stand by the two-Power standard as always hitherto understood by the House. Surely it would be safer and simpler if we were to stick to the old, hallowed and well understood definition of that standard. Surely it would be more honest if we went before The Hague Conference saying that we regarded the two-Power standard as our minimum strength, and, if the Government liked, as our maximum strength also; but let us not make ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of the world by going before the Conference with the bait of one "Dreadnought" which might be dropped if other Powers cut out something else, as if we were putting out a piece of toasted cheese to catch unwary mice. The other Powers were not unwary, and they would not be fooled in that way. He hoped the Prime Minister, when at the Conference he held out that bait to the other Powers, would be able to obtain some result in suspending shipbuilding. He expressed that hope quite as strongly as the right hon. Gentleman could, but he did not believe that any such thing was possible.

Now he came to what he might call the domestic side of the problem, with which the Secretary to the Admiralty had dealt at considerable length, namely, the distribution of the existing fleets. So far as that distribution was merely strategic he need hardly say that he would make no observations upon it. That must be left to the sole discretion of the Sea Lords, and possibly the Defence Committee. But in this case the redistribution had involved serious reductions in the seagoing fleets, and particularly the Channel Fleet, which had been reduced from seventeen battleships to fourteen, and from six cruisers to four. There had been corresponding reductions in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Fleets. What were the new circumstances which had arisen since last year to justify those reductions in the sea-going fleets? The right hon. Gentleman spoke of certain "redundant" ships in those fleets, but he did not explain why they were redundant.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: What I meant to say was that as to the strategical question the Admiralty have for some time been of opinion that the sea-going fleets were too strong—stronger than the strategical wants of the day demanded.

*MR. LEE said that was a policy which he never heard of when he was at the Board of Admiralty. It might have been arrived at since. At any rate, the naval strength of our chief rivals had not been reduced in past years. He did not say that they had been greatly increased but, during the last year, two battleships of the "Deutschland" class had been added to the active fleet of the German Navy. The Admiralty might have good reasons for these reductions, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman ought to tell the House what they were. That brought them to the whole question of secrecy. He supported the right hon. Gentleman last year in his desire to keep confidential the designs of new ships. But there was a point at which secrecy and reticence could become positively harmful to the Admiralty and the country at large. He thought that on the matter of hese reductions they should have a full statement. The right hon. Gentleman had also dealt with the vexed question of the Home Fleet. He had stated that the Admiralty had been subjected to a "rancorous Press" campaign which often was not well informed. He did not wish himself to engage in it. He thought it had been largely owing to misunderstandings, which had been increased by the unofficial defenders of the Admiralty, who in many cases had merely deepened the obscurity and made "confusion worse confounded." If explanations were needed, would it not have been better that the Admiralty should make them officially, rather than inspire unofficial defenders outside to carry out the task—a task for which very often they were incompetent, and in the pursuit of which, with the best intentions, they often showed a great deal more zeal than knowledge. The points under controversy had really never been made clear by the Admiralty, and he thought that a great deal of the criticism had consequently been justified. The Admiralty had never made clear whether the Home Fleet was to be the first line of defence or the reserve. The right hon. Gentleman had cleared up that point to a large extent this afternoon. It had been hastily concluded in many quarters that the Home Fleet was intended as the first line of defence. He did not think any competent authority would have defended the keeping of the first line of defence on the nucleus crew basis. The reasons were obvious. He did not think that any responsible officer afloat would contend that the Home Fleet as at present constituted would possibly be equal in efficiency to the sea-going fleets. The Commander-in-Chief lived ashore, and he would like to ask Sir Arthur Wilson whether that was the proper place for the Commander-in-chief of a fighting fleet. In passing he would like to express the satisfaction of those who had been at the Admiralty at the promotion of that gallant officer, thus securing his service to the country on the active list for another five years. Could the right hon. Gentleman produce any competent expert who would admit that any fleet was really efficient for active naval warfare unless it was constantly exercised at sea, and unless the captains of the various ships knew the capabilities of each other and of the different ships in the squadron? The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that this fleet was to be at sea 70 per cent. of the time spent at sea by the other seagoing fleets. Surely that was an admission of its inferiority. The Nore division, which had been described as an emergency division, should at any rate be kept up to the standard of efficiency of the Channel and other Fleets. But he now understood that the intention of the Admiralty was that the Home Fleet should really be in the nature of a reserve, and that it was merely the old Reserve Fleet renamed and rearranged. He understood from the right hon. Gentleman that it was not intended to compare in war efficiency with the seagoing fleets. He thought it was important that that point should be made absolutely clear to the country, so that there should be no reliance placed upon it as a first line in case of emergency. Another matter which the right hon. Gentleman did not make clear, although it was referred to in the statement of the First Lord, was that a large portion of the Home Fleet was not available, and could not be available, for a long time to come, as it was to undergo large repairs and refits. That was a matter which should have been made clear when the right hon. Gentleman was talking of the present strength of those fleets. The point that many of those friendly to the Admiralty could not understand was why the newest and best ships were to be drafted, as completed, to the Home Fleet, instead of to the seagoing Channel Fleet. Surely the best ships ought to be concentrated in the first fighting line. It was this strange policy of placing the best ships in the reserve that had led to the greater portion of the criticism which the right hon. Gentleman said had largely arisen from misunderstandings. He feared that the Admiralty, in their anxiety to get the fullest credit for creating the Home Fleet, had been trying to represent it as both a first line and a reserve. But there was this danger in connection with the creation of the Home Fleet, that it might encourage the more frequent absence of the Channel Fleet from home waters for diplomatic reasons. Only the other day Lord Lovat elicited the disquieting statement that there was not a single battleship in full commission in British waters or within three days of British waters at that time. He certainly hoped the establishment of the Home Fleet would not lead the Admiralty to yield to diplomatic or other pressure to allow the Channel Fleet to be kept at a distance from home waters in view of the possibility which always existed of an unexpected raid against this country. The whole secret of naval success, as shown by the recent war in the Far East, was to strike sudden and unexpected blows. Surely that lesson was well understood by all our naval rivals, and particularly by those who were inferior to us in strength and could only possibly achieve success by such means. He had talked this question over with many sea officers outside the Admiralty. While they had nothing but praise for the improvement effected by the reorganisation of the Reserve Fleet, they were unanimous, as far as he could judge, in the opinion that the newest and best ships ought to be drafted into the Channel Fleet and that as many of the newest and best ships as possible should be concentrated under our chief fighting admiral. The first line should consist of the best ships, which should be kept in front of the Reserve Fleet; the second line should consist of second best ships and be kept behind. There were one or two other points to which he wished to draw attention. As to the laying down of a fast unarmoured cruiser in Pembroke Dockyard, he thought it had been understood that the laying down of this class of ship had been abandoned for good. If the real purpose were to delay the demise of a moribund dockyard, he did not see why that could not be as well fulfilled by building submarines as had been originally intended. The report made by the First Lord regarding the health of cadets at Osborne College was a very serious matter, affecting as it did the whole rising generation of naval officers. It was significant that no similar epidemics had occurred at the sister college at Dartmouth. The epidemics consisted of only two kinds, and he had heard it stated that they were due to the same cause, the disintegration into fine dust of the surface of the uralite, of which the buildings were made. He would be very glad if the Civil Lord could give the House some information on that subject. Surely in the interests of the cadets and of the public it would be better to rebuild the premises with brick, if necessary, rather than to construct a large new infectious hospital. Another point raised by the First Lord in his statement was the excessive cost to parents of the courses of tuition at Osborne. He confessed that he was astonished to see a practical appeal by the First Lord to private charity to make it possible for cadets coming from the poorer classes to go to Osborne. If the Government thought it desirable that in future officers should be obtained from a great number of classes they ought to reduce the fees at Osborne, instead of suggesting that the cost should be borne by some one else. And yet they actually proposed that local authorities should undertake to pay fees for naval cadets from their districts; in other words, that these cadets should be put on the rates. He did not think such a suggestion was worthy of a great Department. He hoped for a clear declaration from the Government of what they officially understood by the two-Power standard. They ought to know that before they considered the question of going to The Hague Conference with a reduction of our programme.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): I intervene only for a few moments owing to the very pointed reference the hon. Member who has just sat down made to me at the beginning of his speech. I wish, before dealing with what he said, to express my admiration of the way in which my right hon. friend has introduced these Estimates. I remember a very experienced and observant public servant, part of whose duty it was to be present on these occasions either for the Army or the Navy, who told me once that he had never heard a speech made on either of those classes of Estimates that was not immediately pronounced from the opposite side of the House to be a most lucid statement. "Lucid" is supposed to be the regulation compliment. My right hon. friend was more than lucid; he was thoroughly businesslike; there was less make-weight in his speech, I think, than in any speech to which I have listened. It was really a model of Parliamentary oratory, if oratory is the proper word to employ. The hon. Member who has just spoken plunged into the question of The Hague Conference and the international policy of this country. I do not know whether the hon. Member can be taken as representing the policy or opinion of the Front Bench opposite. I am sorry if it is so. To choose him for that purpose was, I think a little extraordinary, because I remember only a year or two ago the hon. Member made one of the most indiscreet and improper speeches. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."]. I withdraw the word "improper"; I say incorrect.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: Incorrectly reported, yes.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That was the hon. Gentleman's misfortune. As it was reported it was a most provoking speech towards a great European Power with whom we were on good terms and still remain on good terms, and I remember I asked at the time whether the head of the Government had yet rebuked him. At all events he calls upon me, and in the first place he brings up the old story of the two-Power standard. I am entirely in favour of the two-Power standard, but we must not think that we are either doing enough or two much in talking about the two-Power standard. My hon. friend has proved that we are far beyond the two-Power standard. He has proved that we are perfectly safe from any infringement of that test for the next three and a half years. Therefore, for us to spend our time in an academic discussion whether the two-Power standard is a good thing or a bad thing seems rather foolish. What I said last year was pretty much to this effect, to deprecate a too slavish use of a useful phrase such as this, which I entirely accepted myself. Supposing we were at any time to be in close alliance with the two-Powers with the largest navies—however close that alliance may be, however almost inconceivable it would be that we were to be on bad terms—should we still rigidly adhere to this two-Power standard [OPPOSITION cries of "Yes"] and go on putting down ship for ship if one or other of these Powers went on building? We have not arrived at that stage of things yet. When we do arrive at it I think there will be a good deal of difference of opinion on the subject. Generally speaking, I agree with the two-Power standard, as I said last year, as a rough-and-ready method by which we can test our naval strength. But then the hon. Member is full of regret that we have gone as far as we have and that I in particular have gone as far as I have gone in commending to the world a cessation of this rivalry of armaments, which I believe to be an insufferable burden. He regards it as ridiculous to attempt to get any hearing for such a strange doctrine at The Hague Conference. The Hague Conference may be said to be the invention of the Emperor of Russia, and what was the very first subject brought before The Hague Conference, and what was the main topic which was the justification for calling it together? It was this very question of reducing the rate of extravagant military expenditure among the Powers. I do not believe that what was a proper and indeed the main topic of discussion on that occasion can be altogether ridiculous and out of place five years afterwards, when the world has, I hope, grown, rather than fallen off, in wisdom. I can assure the hon. Member that I have said nothing on the subject calculated to give offence to any one. The hon. Gentleman said that I spoke of the British Navy as being instituted for purposes of peace. He declared that others could say the same, and said "Why even the German Emperor professes to be a friend of peace."

*MR. LEE: I said nothing of the kind. I quoted from a telegram from the German Navy League to the German Emperor.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Oh! The German Navy League. I believe they are the friends of peace; but I think it is not very good tactics or very good taste for us to assume on the part of a certain Great Power and on the part of a body like the German Navy League that they have any other object than peace which they think to bring about by strengthening the power of their country. That is our view, of course. So far from doing any harm by bringing it forward, I conceive it is our duty to bring it forward, holding the opinion we do—holding the opinion that there is a great movement of feeling among thinking people in all the nations of the world in favour of abitration and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and of some restraint on the enormous expenditure involved in the present system so long as it exists. I for my part should not have thought I was doing right or that I could continue to hold the position I occupy if I did not use any power I have to give encouragement to and to help on, as far as I can, that sort of feeling. There is no sinister purpose in this country to force on any Power a reduction of their armaments, even if we could. We have no desire to interfere with the proper discretion of those who know best their own interests and what are the wishes of their own people; but, knowing the feeling of this House, and the wishes and desires of the people of this country, we have desired, and still desire, to place ourselves in the very front rank of those who think that the warlike attitude of Powers as displayed by the excessive growth of armaments is a curse to Europe, and that the sooner it is checked, in however moderate a degree, the better.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): In ordinary circumstances, if I took any part in this debate, I should certainly have reserved myself till a later stage; but the course taken by the right hon. Gentleman—I do not complain at all of it—of getting up at once to reply to the criticism of my hon. friend near me has turned, for the moment, the debate into a broader and more international line than the question that you, Mr. Speaker, do now leave the chair on the Navy Estimates, usually follows. It will in these circumstances be fitting for me to say a few words in commentary and criticism of the position the right hon. Gentleman has taken up. I may say for myself, before I proceed to the substance of his remarks, that I do not think he was well advised in going back to a speech delivered three years ago by my hon. friend, which was misreported and unfairly commented on, and which, whether it was misreported or not, is certainly not relevant to this debate, and may well be left to belong to those controversies which from time to time arise in this House—controversies which are perfectly justifiable when they arise, but hardly worth while reviving some years after their natural demise. The right hon. Gentleman was asked by my hon. friend—and this was not an old and musty question, but strictly relevant to the subject before the House—whether he adhered to the new version of the two-Power standard which he gave for the first time in the course of last year. I hoped at the time that the right hon. Gentleman spoke rashly and inadvertently and would be prepared to explain, or explain away, the new policy he then, for the first time, laid down; but I do not gather that he has altered his view. I gather that the view he then expressed is still his view, though I do not believe any Member on his Front Bench shares it. He still holds that the two-Power standard does not mean, as it has always been thought to mean on both sides of the House, a strength in our Fleet which would enable us to engage with good hope of success the fleets of any two Powers that might be arrayed against us—or, in other words, that our Fleet should be, not only equal to, but have a margin of safety beyond, the strength of the fleets of any two other Powers. That is what the phrase "the two-Power standard" has hitherto meant in the mouth of every speaker in this House, whether he approved of such a standard or not. At all events, the meaning was perfectly clear and explicit. But the right hon. Gentleman last year, and again on the present occasion, has thrown a cloud of confusion into this subject.

SIR H. CAMPBBLL-BANNERMAN: I said I agreed with it entirely as a rule.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As a rule? I really do not want to take up the right hon. Gentleman in any verbal attack. This is far too serious a matter. There is the possibility of two very different opinions on this subject. One is that which I have just expressed—namely, that this country should have, and always have, no matter what its foreign alliances and relations may be, at least a naval strength which will enable it to deal, with good hope of success, with the fleets of any two other nations which may be brought against it. That is a perfectly clear policy. But there is another policy which can be stated quite clearly, and which may be brought against the other, and I should have thought it was embodied in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman last year and his speech to-day. That second view I understand to be that, while the two-Power standard is a convenient phrase and may represent a good ordinary working hypothesis, nevertheless, if you feel you are on really good terms with one of the great naval Powers whose strength was to be taken into account in measuring the fleet we ought to build, then we may rightly and safely and patriotically fall below that two-Power standard which I have endeavoured to define and which I thought had been hitherto accepted. These are two entirely different schools of thought, and I had hoped that there was unanimity in favour of the first. But unless the speech in which the right hon. Gentleman introduced the Estimates does not deserve the epithet of lucid which was applied to it by my hon. friend, and unless the right hon. Gentleman was much more obscure than he usually is, he appears to have been seduced into the error the Prime Minister has followed, and he does not hold, any more than the Prime Minister, that the two-Power standard as I have defined it ought to be preserved in this country. I think that a most serious statement. It is perfectly true that at this moment the Government have a very easy task in keeping up the two-Power standard, because, owing to the fact that we, the late Government, began, with the consent of the late Opposition, the policy of building Dreadnoughts—it is owing to that, and, I believe, to that alone, that there is a pause in foreign shipbuilding at the present moment. Therefore, the question does not come up practically at this moment. The two-Power standard, as we hold it, and as right hon. Gentlemen opposite held it formerly, does not clash and does not come up here at the present moment. But, Sir, the time of strain for the House and the country, which right hon. Gentlemen opposite can sc conveniently defer for the present financial year, will come when foreign countries have determined on the type of ships with which they propose to meet the Dreadnoughts, and when, having determined that, they proceed to build Dreadnoughts, or the equivalents of Dreadnoughts, according to the programme they have announced.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: When will the time arrive?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Quite so. I understand in three-and-a-half years, according to the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: In three-and-a-half years France will have built two battleships and Germany four battleships and two cruisers, if they keep to their programme.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought the right hon. Gentleman distinctly stated it would not be for three-and-a-half years. Let me concentrate him on my point. My proposition is that there are foreign nations who have distinctly laid down that they mean to increase their naval strength. They are pausing in this policy and in carrying out their programme because they have not determined the type of ship to build. When they have determined that, then will come the strain for this House, then the burden will be thrown on the taxpayer, and then we shall have to determine whether we mean to take the easy path adumbrated by the right hon. Gentleman, or, at all costs and sacrifices, to adhere to the two-Power standard, as hitherto understood in this House and the country.

Now I do not know on the shoulders of what Administration this burden will fall, whether this House of Commons or another House of Commons will have to sanction it, but however the House is constituted I earnestly trust that when the time of trial comes, as I fear it will come, the Government will have the strength and courage to propose, and the House of Commons the patriotism to support, any sacrifice that may be required to make us safe against any combination of any two Powers throughout the world. [Cries of "Agreed."] Yes, agreed by everybody but the Prime Minister, a very improtant man, and it is no use his faithful followers shouting "Agreed" to me when he does not.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The worst of it is I shouted it too.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then may it truly be said that I have not risen in vain on this occasion when I have got the explicit statement from the Prime Minister, even by way of interjection, which he has failed to give in two set speeches. Then I come, if the House allows me, to that part of the Prime Minister's speech which dealt with The Hague Conference and the comments of my hon. friend on the subject of The Hague Conference. I think the hon. Gentleman was loudly and properly cheered when he expressed his aversion to the growing burden of armaments in this country, and all other countries. I do not suppose there is a single man in this House who dissents from the aspirations he expressed. I am ready and I am sure my hon. friend is ready to go further and to say that if the right hon. Gentleman, through The Hague Conference, or by any other machinery, can really find a method by which consistently with the security of the Empire this burden can be diminished, he will receive the unanimous and grateful thanks of every section of the community, whatever may be their political creed. Of course everybody must desire the end which the Prime Minister has in view; the question is, is he going the right way about it. Do the declarations which he has made—which he has publicly expressed in a formal document—are they really calculated to bring us nearer the end which he and we all desire? I am afraid I cannot take the view that they are calculated to produce those admirable results. There is always the danger, necessarily, human nature being what it is and international suspicions being what they are, that when you deal with this question of armaments, foreign nations will suspect your motive and think that you are trying to relieve yourselves of burdens by inducing them to diminish their expenditure, without in reality doing anything to reduce your own strength. That is always the danger we are bound to run, and I am bound to say the Prime Minister's way of putting that matter is likely to increase their suspicion in the highest possible way. Let me refer to what the right hon. Gentleman said. It is at the end of the article—

> "Let me in conclusion say a word on the part of Great Britain. We (that is the Government of the country) have already given earnest of our sincerity by the considerable reductions that have been effected in our naval and military expenditure."

Now, Sir, it is quite true that the Army Estimates show a reduction this year, and it is quite true that the Navy Estimates show a reduction this year, though I believe a very small one. But when the right hon. Gentleman goes with these two reductions in his hands to The Hague Conference and says to the diplomatists there collected together, "We come before you with the earnest of our peace-loving intentions; look how we have reduced our Estimates; look how we have reduced our Navy," then the foreign diplomatists may say: "Well, that is quite right, but are we to understand that your Army is weaker for offensive purpose, than it was before, or that your Navy is weaker for offensive purposes than it was before?" ["Oh."] They must ask that; that is the point; it is not what your Navy costs or what your Army costs, it is their efficiency as a possible hostile weapon against other nations. Then the foreign diplomatists will turn for a commentary from the Prime Minister's article——

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: At your suggestion.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is a very unworthy interruption. ["Oh."] He will turn from the Prime Minister's article to the speech made by the Minister for War and the speech made by the representative of the Admiralty, and he will see that the Minister for War claims that his plan will for the first time enable us to send an expeditionary force of 150,000 men out of the country on the very shortest notice, and he will learn that in spite of the small reduction in the Navy the Navy itself is now distributed and built in a manner which makes it stronger than it ever was before. Then he will say, "On what principle do you come with these reductions in your hand?

Your claim to the British people is that while you effect economy you are increasing your military and naval strength, and you come to us and you ask us foreign nations not to diminish our expenditure but to diminish our forces; so that at the very moment that you are increasing and boasting of increasing your own strength you are asking us to reduce ours." The right hon. Gentleman interrupted me just now as if I had made an unpatriotic suggestion and as if I had pointed out an ingenious argument which foreigners would be too stupid to discover for themselves. It is a fundamental error of some politicians to think that the mere expression—the mere covering of any policy with a phrase expressing good intention is quite sufficient; that you need never look below the surface for the reality of the thing; and you should never be explicit but should allow the reality to float about in this charming manner in this agreeable atmosphere of benevolent platitudes. Benevolent platitudes have no effect on foreign diplomatists, and if we can do no more than to put up benevolent platitudes before them, then the great object of the right hon. Gentleman, with which we all sympathise, is not an object which he is likely to accomplish. It is quite impossible—that is the truth of the matter—it is quite impossible to ride the two horses at the same time. It is quite impossible successfully to explain to your own country that you are increasing the strength both of your Army and of your Navy, and to persuade other people that you are making great sacrifices in the interest of international disarmament. The two arguments really cannot cling together, at least not with success, and I venture to suggest that the right hon. Gentleman does not do a service to the cause of international peace when he uses arguments which can be at once exposed and will be at once exposed, if indeed they can even for a moment persuade or mould the opinion or move the intellect of anybody who listens to them. There is one observation I want to make at this stage on a narrower part of the question, which will naturally come up for discussion on occasions like the present, which has relation to the distribution of the British Fleet and some allied questions. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty that this House should be very cautious in making any comment on the war distribution of the Fleet, the responsibility for which must rest primarily with the Admiralty and the Defence Committee, and ultimately with the Cabinet. I am a believer in that policy of concentration which began in 1904, which was continued in 1905, and which the present Government have found necessary, and very rightly necessary, to carry still further. I am a believer in that policy of concentration from the point of view of war, from the point of naval efficiency in case of war. I do not believe there is any real case to be made against it. I do not blame the Government at all, but I think it is a fact that one of the consequences of this has been that it is not so easy now as it used to be in olden times to show our flag where, for diplomatic reasons, it is in the highest degree desirable that our flag should be shown. Formerly there were an immense number of vessels scattered all over the great ocean highways. Those we have deliberately reduced because they could neither fight well nor fly well. They have been, colloquially speaking, scrapped, and they have been rightly scrapped; but the purely military problem of naval stratagem, and the argument based on naval strategy, point to one direction and one direction alone. We cannot forget that while, thank Heaven, we are rarely at war, there are duties to be done in time of peace, and the problem must be faced as to how these duties are to be carried out if the process of concentration is carried to its characteristic and logical conclusion. Shortly before I left office I remember receiving a private deputation, I do not think there was any report in the newspapers, of gentlemen interested in the West Indies, who expressed strongly the belief that their interests were somewhat imperilled by the concentration both of the Fleet and of the Army. They were more exercised at the moment with the removal of a regiment from the West Indies than in the concentration of the ships, but the problem is fundamentally the same in both cases, and the reasons for concentration are exactly the same really in the case of the Army as they are in the case of the Navy. I talked the matter over with them, and what I said I have no doubt has been reported to the Department concerned. What I suggested to them was that a possible method of dealing with this was for the Government of the day frankly to admit that a new situation had arisen, a situation entirely different from that which existed when the ship that was best qualified to carry large bodies of marines and to do police work was also a very good fighting vessel, and not a very expensive vessel. Now, the changes in naval architecture have had this result, that if you are going to have a large ship, which is also to be a first-class fighting ship, its production would be expensive, and much of the expense would be wasted if she has to do police duty. If, on the other hand, you are going to have a small fighting ship, and you are going to do police duty with her, a torpedo vessel, or a small third-class cruiser, then you will find that she is unfitted for that sort of duty; that she does not hold enough men; that she is not sufficiently comfortable; and that she has not all the conveniences and mechanical arrangements fitted for this police work; and I believe that the Government will have to face the problem of differentiating between the fighting and the non-fighting part of the Navy. The Admiralty have, rightly, the strongest objection to that ship which professes to be a fighting ship, but which cannot fight efficiently—a ship which can be picked up by any effective foreign cruiser or battle ship of the most modern type. I think this argument is unanswerable, but the only way out of it is either by building special ships which are not fighting ships but which can do police duty, can carry bodies of marines and bluejackets, can show the flag, and can be adequately armed for all the fighting which can ever be required except when we are engaged in a really serious naval war. That point was not raised by the right hon. Gentleman who opened the debate, but I think it must have been present to the mind of the Admiralty, because special events have brought it before the public eye. I do not criticise the Admiralty for anything which occurred in the West Indies; I do not think they are in the smallest degree responsible for the action of the Fleet on the occasion of the calamity there. I am not at all sure that even under the old system there would have been a ship present; and, therefore, I hope the House will understand me when I say that I have not the smallest desire to make any criticism, however faint, upon the policy which the Admiralty have pursued. But I think that the Government whom they serve will have to face the problem of this policing of waters as distinct from the problem of dealing with great naval operations. They will, I am sure, have to differentiate the ships which have to do police duty from ships which are to do fighting work. It must cost some money, I do not know how much, because it depends on the scale on which you do it, but that that is the only issue out of the present difficulty I am almost assured. As the Government have much greater advantages than I can possess, and if they have been devoting their minds to this particular problem, I hope before the debate ends they will tell us at what stage they have arrived in their deliberations. At this point of the debate, that is the only technical issue which I desire to raise. The House, or some hon. Members, seemed to think that I was unduly controversial, though I do not agree with them, in the earlier part of my speech; but however that may be, I think, at all events with regard to this small but not unimportant matter, I have endeavoured to raise it in a manner which will cause no embarrassment to the Government, and I certainly intend in no sense to reflect on the present Board of Admiralty. For the rest, I desire to reserve any further comments upon Admiralty policy until we have Vote A before us, and until we shall have had answers from the Government on the points raised; by which time the forces will have deployed more than they have at present, and we shall see exactly where they stand in regard to the naval policy of the country.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said he would like to bring the House to the realities of the situation so far as they concerned the standard which had been discussed from a somewhat hypothetical point of view. No one doubted that, at the present moment, we had a three to one superiority. It was difficult to ask even those who, like the Secretary to the Admiralty, thought that three to one might in certain circumstances be too little, or in other circumstances two to one too great, to bind the hands of future Parliaments by an absolute declaration on the subject of the two-Power standard. The two-Power standard had always been regarded according to the taste of the speakers who discussed it. It was no new controversy: it raged six or seven years ago over the meaning of the two-Power standard, and afterwards was pursued in another place. Delicate matters might lie behind, and they afforded good reason for not binding the hands of future Parliaments. Supposing the House were willing to consider the present three-Power standard in regard to the United States, did they desire to bind the House until the United States had developed to twice its present wealth and strength? Although we were infinitely far from any difficulty with the United States as a rival naval Power, yet surely that was a matter which must enter into their consideration. It was a question on which Parliament could not bind its successors, and abstract declarations as to the two-Power standard seemed to him to be a little out of place. Alarm had been caused by a speech of the German Emperor, and by the activities of the German Navy League. But the actual facts about the German Fleet at the present time were encouraging to us in the highest degree, and he doubted whether any Member of the House was prepared to maintain that we had not a basis of more than three to one of strength against Germany, as matters at present stood. Then came the question of looking forward to a time of renewed activity by foreign Powers. None who had given attention to the policy of France, and the French naval debates, would doubt that the pause in French building was not caused by any question of designs, the quarrel about which was settled long ago. Their last doubt was in reference to turbines, and the difficulty of securing a supply from French manufacturers, without buying abroad. The final decision on that point, however, was taken in December. Germany we should watch; and there could be no doubt in the mind of anyone who watched the policy of our present Board of Admiralty, that it was their intention, with the support of the Cabinet, to continue to build two to one with a margin, as against Germany. As the matter stood at present, he thought the House would be content with that standard, and there was not the slightest chance in the world he believed of our falling behind it. The House had to deal with very important and substantial subsidiary questions properly arising on the Naval Estimates of the present year. Differences of opinion had arisen, and grave doubts had been entertained, as to whether details of the policy of the Board of Admiralty ought, to some extent, to be considered by the House. The Opposition, of course, were *participes criminis*, if any crime there were, because their Leader had admitted very frankly that the late Government and the present Government had pursued the same naval policy, a policy which had been criticised by very distinguished men, the late Lord Goschen and others. It was the policy of the two Front Benches.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think that is quite true, broadly speaking, but what my hon. friend commented upon was the new programme.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said he did not propose to deal with the difficulties of technical questions, because he agreed that they could not sufficiently deal with them. But he was going to refer to some of the doubts which distinguished authorities, political and naval, had hinted at, and which had largely found expression in the debate that day. He thought that the late Board of Admiralty, Sir John Fisher and his colleagues, and the present Board of Admiralty, had themselves to blame for many of the embarrassments which had arisen, and he agreed, with the spokesmen on the Front Bench opposite, in this complaint, that in some matters there had been unusual secrecy. But in one most important case this had produced a good result—he referred to the case of the "Dreadnought," where it had been productive of good results. But the secrecy had in some matters been accompanied by a kind of boasting which had defeated its own object, and which, by making the case too strong and incapable of being justified by the facts, had increased the public alarm. For example, there had been mention of the great deeds which had been accomplished by the present Board of Admiralty, some of which were achieved before the late Government went out of office. Some of those boasts it was impossible to justify, and when those were mixed up with deeds that were sound, they damaged the whole. It was stated that we had gone far ahead of all foreign Powers in the construction of submarines, but it was the fact that the French were engaged upon the construction of submarines fifteen years before we began to build them, and of course a start of fifteen years could not be so easily and quickly overtaken. Secrecy and boasting had been a mistake, but the real question for the House of Commons was whether the policy was sound, and in essentials it seemed to him that it was sound. The Secretary to the Admiralty had said that there had been one battleship lost and one fewer constructed than were contemplated in the Cawdor Memorandum. He thought, however, they must gather from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition that he felt that, under present circumstances, he would have made the same change himself as had been made in the present programme. The practical question was whether it was wise or not to say to other Powers, "If you will meet us, we will build one fewer of these big ships." He thought it was a fair and reasonable offer, and one which might conceivably lead to a movement in other countries for the reduction of the construction of these gigantic and costly ships; but, in the meantime, it was a fact that we had got a tremendous start in the construction of these monsters. What was the answer to the criticism of the late Civil Lord to the Admiralty that we were going to put this most efficient ship of all the ships in the world in the wrong fleet? It was proposed to put this powerful ship into the Home fleet instead of the Channel fleet, and his hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn had suggested that the reason was the difficulty of manœuvring with other ships. There was, of course, obviously another reason, and that was one which had affected the shipbuilding policy of all the other Powers. It was one on which the gravest doubts had been expressed—it concerned the armament. It was the act of the present Sea Lords, already advising the late Government, that decided the late Government to adopt the "all big" policy, which was based entirely on the idea that they could not fire 9·2 in. guns and 12 in. guns effectively from the same ship at the same time. If they carried 12 in. guns they could not carry any other large guns. If so, however, all our other first-class battleships, carrying as they did the two kinds, were put down into another class. It was those facts which, he thought, had prevented all possibility of treating the "Dreadnought" as anything but an experimental ship. And that was why she could not take her place with other ships. We must wait until she had colleagues of her own. She was a great, probably a stupendously successful, experiment, which all the other Powers had decided to imitate. Germany, France, and Japan had decided to imitate our experiment, which was admitted to be successful by all the other Powers who had so often led us in these matters, but who were now flattering this country by following our policy of "Dreadnoughts," concentration and scrapping. The doubt which was expressed by Lord Goschen, Admiral Custance, Admiral Mahan, and other distinguished men, was whether the gap between the greater and the smaller armament was not too great, and for a long time that was a fact which weighed heavily with students of Tsushima. The Japanese ought to know their own battle best. It had been said that they were going to put into their "Dreadnoughts" a larger intermediate armament, consisting of 6-in. and 4·7 guns. Now, however, there had been a change. He supposed they might take it that that was so unless it was contradicted. The Japanese had decided to drop the 6-inch armament in their new "Dreadnoughts," retaining 4·7, and he understood that the British Admiralty had come to the same conclusion in regard to the smaller armament. The "Dreadnought" was an experimental ship, but she had been so successful that she would be imitated by all the Powers throughout the world. When they were considering the question of how many of these great ships we ought to build, and whether we could prevail on other Powers to build fewer, they ought always to have regard to the doctrine that it was easier to reduce the Navy, which was all important to us, than it was to reduce the Army, which was less important. What were the facts? In 1904–5, the Empire spent £42,000,000 on its Fleet and £58,000,000 on its land forces. In 1905–6 the expenditure was £40,000,000 on the Fleet and £60,000,000 on the land forces; in 1906–7 the figures were £36,000,000 and £60,000,000, and in the present year they were £33,500,000 and £55,500,000 respectively. They had cut down during the last four years the expenditure on the land forces by £2,500,000, whilst during the same period the expenditure on the Fleet had fallen from £42,000,000 to £33,500,000. He was not complaining of the reductions. He did not think they had gone too far. But although at the present moment, by the admission of the Leader of the Opposition, and in the opinion of everybody in the House, the reductions had been safely made, they must always remember the fact that the greater ease with which they could reduce the Fleet did constitute a danger. One question was whether, in the future, they would be able to avoid that portion of the margin above the two-Power standard which consisted in our enormous strength of cruisers. Would they be able to avoid the pressure of those who were filled with the ideas that were universally recognised two years ago, but which were ancient history now, of building cruisers for the protection of commerce against commerce destroyers? That was a question which the House would have to consider with great care, because there would be pressure from the constituences, from Chambers of Commerce, from all who had been trained in views which were impressed upon them by every Board of Admiralty up to a year or two ago. The fact was that the conditions of naval warfare had changed during the last two years—he believed during the last year—so tremendously to our advantage through the universal recognition upon the continent of Europe that the policy of commerce destruction was impossible to carry out in war, that we should be able safely to reduce that margin and to spend our money on battleships. That was, he knew, a startling doctrine; but the proof, to his mind, was overwhelming. The great strategic authorities who, from the point of view of war with us and of the destruction of our commerce, had been following this matter closely all over the world, had shown what the life of a corsair, of a commerce-destroying cruiser, would be under modern naval conditions. The universal belief among the highest strategic authorities abroad who formerly believed in the destruction of our commerce by cruisers in time of war was now that it was impossible, because it could not be done without sinking, and by sinking they incurred the hostility of the great neutrals. They did not think it was likely that this country would ever be at war with a continental Power and the United States at the same time. They assumed that were we at war with the continental Powers the United States would be a neutral friend to us. There was, of course, such a thing as causing panic—a naval policy of a continental Power which was not a war policy, though designed to make us believe that it was. Did anybody believe that if the Germans intended to attack us, as some people said, they would talk about their dispositions as they did? When a Power intended to make war it dispersed and scattered its Fleet, and then suddenly concentrated and attacked; the ships did not remain concentrated all the time. The danger of commerce destruction was now passing away from us, and we could afford to hold our hand until we saw what foreign Powers did. The hon. Member for King's Lynn had said that the Germans were going to build annually two new fast cruisers which might prey on our trade. He did not think they could, but we should have to build new cruisers as though they could. No doubt if Germany carried out the policy indicated by the hon. Member we should have to build new cruisers. He would be delighted to see the Germans throwing away their money in that direction instead of strengthening their battleships. The Russian cruisers which six times got outside Vladivostok finally succeeded for two days in placing themselves on a trade route. They captured there some small Japanese fishing craft, but they got into trouble with this country, with Germany, and with the United States. Therefore, in this matter, while we must keep our battleship standard and our cruiser standard, we need not look forward to having in the future to build that overwhelming supremacy of cruisers which had been one of the heavy calls upon us in the past. There had been a great waste of money as the result of frequent changes of policy. Foreign Governments had suddenly dropped the desire to acquire coaling stations and naval bases. That was the prevailing policy at one time abroad. In connection with the French Corsair system there were to be great naval bases fortified as the homes of the Corsairs of the future. There were Fort de France in Martinique, Noumea in New Caledonia, Saigon in Further India, Diego Suarez in Madagascar, and Dakar in West Africa. The French Government had decided bit by bit not fully to garrison these places, not to spend money in further fortifying them, and not to have local squadrons there as had been at one time intended. Therefore while we must carefully watch our battleship strength, we could afford to hold our hands for a certain time in regard to cruisers, and not to give way at once to any clamour on that point. In order to get the best value for our money we ought not to look only at one side of the question. The policy of scrapping was supposed to have got rid of the pressure on the dockyards and the immediate necessity for Rosyth. That was very doubtful, and the House might have to make up its mind to face the creation of a dockyard somewhere in a safer position than the British Channel. One of the proposals which we were to make at The Hague Conference, he understood, was that Europe should consent to forbid the use of floating mines. He believed it was one of the advisers of the Board of Admiralty who invented floating mines, but the French developed them most rapidly. The French did not keep their secrets so well as Germany or Japan or ourselves at the present moment. Of course, they might hope for the abolition of floating mines as one of the results of the Hague Conference. We secured the temporary disuse of the dropping of shells out of aerial machines. He imagined, however, we should go on making floating mines, and possibly practising their use in case any one should break the regulation, for such arrangements did get broken. There was an arrangement under the Protocol of St. Petersburg of 1868 forbidding the use of small hand grenades filled with high explosives, and it was renewed by the Brussels Convention in 1874. It was notoriously violated during the late war. There were fortifications at Port Arthur built out of the wreckage of what had been human bodies half burned and half blown to pieces by the use of hand grenades. The French writer Col. de Grandprey stated that the Russians were the first to break their own agreement. If the Japanese did not initiate the use of the grenades, they certainly imitated very fast. Both sides used those forbidden explosives when the struggle became a matter of life and death. The use of floating mines might be a matter of life and death to a great Power. Could any one who knew the double-running tide in the Solent doubt that there might come a time when it would pay someone to float mines there, and that Portsmouth and Southampton might easily become unusable? Expenditure sooner or later would have to be made in some less dangerous quarter of the country. They could not treat the money saved in connection with Rosyth as having been saved for all time. As these costly demands for a new dockyard were certain to be made in the future, they ought to be careful not to waste money. In places like St. Lucia we suddenly changed the whole of our declared policy, and hundreds of thousands of pounds were thrown into the sea. He had placed a notice on the Paper dealing with this point of naval bases, and he would like the House to consider it, not because of the horrible waste of money in the past, but as a matter of the policy to be pursued. The Admiralty policy, he confessed, did not appear to him to justify itself as regarded naval bases by anything they had heard up to the present time. One of the terrors of the seaman was that he would be blown up or shot by his own side. Attacks were made at night, and it was possible that officers in command of forts and batteries might not be able to read our secret signals. They knew from the North Sea incident a few years ago what might occur. How were they going to distinguish friend from foe in certain circumstances, and how were they going to prevent mistakes? Judging from the speeches which the late Prime Minister had made in the House, he imagined that it was pretty well admitted that in the event of one class of war night attacks must be looked for in Bantry Bay, and another class of war in the Tyne and the Forth.

Last year and this year the Admiralty and the War Office made an announcement on this subject. The Army Memorandum this year stated that—

> "Recruiting for Militia submarine miners had been stopped in view of the transfer of their duties to the Navy."

Last year a still stronger statement was made by the War Office. It was in these words—

> "Submarine mining as announced last year by my predecessor, and the responsibility for the submarine defence of all ports at home and abroad, has been transferred to the Admiralty, and the mines have already been handed over to the Navy."

Where were the mines? They were sold for £50,000, the price of old iron, and they cost £1,000,000. That was another illustration of the dreadful cost of the change which had been made in the scheme of defence from the Army to the Navy. Up to three years ago they had been taught that the whole system of defence must be a combined firing by land batteries playing upon a patch of water illuminated by the electric light over the mine field beneath. That was the system adopted in regard to Berehaven, and there was no secret in regard to it. Well, that system was the one system laid down, approved of, and insisted upon by the Admiralty up to three years ago, when it was suddenly abandoned. The change was to save £100,000 a year, and the whole Royal Engineer and Volunteer submarine mining units were abolished and their duties handed over to the Navy who abandoned them. The French authorities said that we were wrong, and Cherbourg was at the present time defended by submarine mine fields. The Government of India said the same in regard to the defence of the Hooghly. The ports of the Commonwealth of Australia were still to be defended by submarine electric mines. The Admiralty had taken a course which possibly might be right or wrong, but it had involved an enormous waste of money. What he wanted to know was, when we were giving up that system of defence, what was to take its place? The right hon. Member for Croydon had told the House that the Admiralty intended to replace submarine electric mines operated by local forces by a fleet of submarine boats, but the difficulty was that there must be a special type of submarine boats. For those boats they must have the pick of officers and men—men of the highest daring—but were these going to be content to sail for ever up and down the waters opposite to our naval ports? Of course not. They would desire to go in for offensive work. Let the Admiralty have their own way, by all means, if they were convinced in their own wisdom that their own ports, such as the estuary below the Forth Bridge, St. Margaret's Hope, and Rosyth, were safe even if there were no mines there. But what of the great commercial ports like those of the Mersey, Severn, Clyde, and Tyne Submarine Mining Divisions, which would be open to attack? It was not a question of the German fleet coming up to bombard the port. It was a question of small craft crawling up during the night and setting fire to works in the open ports. Newcastle had been perfectly defended by means of an admirable system of submarine mines which had no equal in the world. So good was it that the Volunteer submarine miners of the Tyne Division were employed to do the laying of electric mines at Portsmouth and other naval ports. Surely the merchants and manufacturers of Newcastle, whose workshops would be needed in time of war, ought to have some voice in the matter. They had seen their electric mine fields, which were quite different from floating mines, taken away from the river channel, and Newcastle was now without that defence. Should they not, in their own interest, be allowed to have their own defence in the event of war as they considered it best? This was not a matter of first-class importance, but it was an example to the country of the horrible cost of the changes of the military and naval policy of the country. That was a question which demanded inquiry.

Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs) said that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty had stated that he believed the present Navy adequately met the two-Power standard while the late Secretary to the Admiralty maintained that the tendency of the present Estimates was to fall away from that standard, and in that he was supported by the Leader of the Opposition. He had listened with a little astonishment to the contention that we should maintain the two-Power standard without any reference to the conditions of the international situation. Up to the time when the two-Power standard began to find acceptance we had been content with a naval strength that exceeded that of France by 50 per cent. What made the change to the two-Power standard necessary? He thought that no one disputed the fact that we adopted that standard because of the alliance between France and Russia which was supposed, and perhaps rightly supposed, to be hostile to the interests of this country. It was held to be possible and even probable that we might be engaged in a war with the combined forces of these two Powers, and he did not dispute that we were justified in preparing to meet that combination. But that condition of things no longer existed. Russia had lost her fleet and, absorbed by her internal troubles, had ceased for the moment to be a factor in the international situation. Nor was that all. By the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 all outstanding differences between the two countries had been amicably settled. What justification then was there in the altered circumstances of our time for the continued maintenance of the two-Power standard? Even, however, on the assumption that the two-Power standard was still necessary, he contended that our power at this moment was enormously in excess of that standard. He thought that he could prove this by every test usually adopted in measuring the relative strength of fleets. He took, first, the test of expenditure. From a Return presented to this House last week, it appeared that the expenditure of the United Kingdom in 1905–6 was £33,252,500; that of France, £12,747,963, and that of Germany £11,424,850, making for the two Powers £24,172,813. That meant that we expended some £9,000,000 in excess of the two Powers.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis) said that if the hon. Member would turn to the appendix of the Return he would find that a very large reduction had to be made as to the expenditure.

Mr. Murray Macdonald.

*Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD said he quite agreed that a reduction had to be made. but against it allowance had to be made for the fact that we got greater value for our expenditure than the French or Germans. It seemed to him therefore that in respect of expenditure we were not very far from a three-Power standard. He took, next, the test of manning. Last year we had 129,000 men; France, according to a memorandum recently circulated by Lord Brassey from which he took his figures, had 52,000, and Germany 42,000. That gave us an excess in men of 35,000 over the two-Power standard. The third test was the comparative number of first-class battleships. Experts estimated the life of a battleship at fifteen years. He therefore started from the year 1892, and he found that excluding the "Montagu," which was wrecked, and the "Dreadnought" which was not commissioned when the last Dilke Return was presented we had since that year built forty-three first-class battleships. France had built ten and Germany fifteen, making a total for the two Powers of twenty-five ships. We therefore exceeded the numbers of the two Powers by eighteen, the excess being by itself greater than the whole power of the German Navy in this class of ship. He might add that during the same period the United States had built fourteen first-class battleships, and adding that to the numbers of France and Germany we had a superiority of four ships over the three Powers combined. But there was another test which indicated in an even more striking way the relative superiority of our strength. Since the Russo-Japanese war he believed that experts had agreed that displacement was a legitimate measure of fighting efficiency when applied to ships of even date. Accepting that view, he found from the Dilke Return that since 1892 we had built thirty-two first-class battleships of 14,000 tons and over, while France had built none, Germany none, and the United States had built only two. Measured by this test therefore our strength was out of all proportion to our requirements and in excess of a two, or even a three-Power standard. But he would go a step further. He had already said that we had built forty-three first-class battleships since 1892. Their aggregate tonnage was 615,250 tons; the aggregate tonnage of the ten French ships was 116,717 tons, and of the fifteen German ships 174,959 tons, making a total for the two Powers of 291,676 tons. Our strength exceeded that of the two Navies combined by 319,574 tons. Nor was that all. The fourteen battleships of the United States had an aggregate tonnage of 166,933, and if they added this to the aggregate tonnage of France and Germany they got a total tonnage for the three Powers of 458,609 tons. Our strength thus exceeded the strength of the three Powers by 152,641 tons, an excess not far short of the whole strength of the German Navy in first-class battleships. He turned next to consider our strength in cruisers, upon which we had to rely in case of war for the attack and defence of commerce. We withdrew in 1904 all armoured cruisers built before 1899, and since that year we had launched and equipped twenty-eight vessels of this class, and dating from the same year France had launched and equipped thirteen, Germany five, and the United States five. We therefore in this class of ship exceeded the three-Power standard by five. In tonnage we exceeded the three Powers by 82,947 tons, which was not far shor of double the whole strength of the German Navy in this class of ship. There again our strength was equal not to a two, or a three or a four-Power but a five-Power standard. Of protected cruisers of the first class we had twenty-one, France had seven, Germany none, and the United States three. And if we measured our strength in this class by tonnage it was not far short of a nine-Power standard. In second-class protected cruisers we were both in numbers and tonnage considerably in excess of a three-Power standard. He regretted to weary the House with so many figures, but he thought they had enabled him to prove that even on the assumption that the state of our relations with foreign Powers justified us in maintaining a two-Power standard, our naval strength was far in excess of our requirements. He asked again what justification there was for the maintenance of a naval force involving such an enormous expenditure of the resources of the nation as the present Estimates proposed. If we were maintaining this standard to meet risks which did not now exist but which might conceivably arise at some indefinite future time, he held that we were scandalously wasting the resources of the nation. If on the other hand we were maintaining it to meet real risks—risks that were foreseen and could be measured —let them know what those risks were. Against such risks they would all be ready and eager to bear any burden, however heavy it might be. He had now laid his case in support of a reduction of the present Naval Estimates before the House. He had been at some pains in the comparison he had just given to the House to show how vastly greater our strength was as compared with the strength of Germany. He had done that because he knew that many among them feared that Germany was strengthening herself for a war with us. He wished to express his own opinion that such a fear was absolutely groundless. France was also strengthening her navy, but that did not excite any alarm in us. She was strengthening herself not against us but against Germany. Germany on the other hand, so long as she adhered to the policy she pursued when she imposed upon France the terms of peace which brought the war of 1870 to a conclusion, burdened herself with the necessity of being prepared at any moment for a renewal of that war. And so long as Germany laboured under that disability he put it to any man of common sense whether the statesmen of that country could be guilty of any greater folly than the pursuance of a policy that could lead to a conflict with this country. It was not to our interest that such a conflict should be brought about. It could not be to the interest of Germany. But he would go a step further. Even if the fears to which he had alluded were well grounded, he would still maintain that it would be wise on our part to retrench expenditure. There were two methods of preparing a people to bear the trials and burdens of war if war should come. The one, which was generally adopted on the Continent, was to subordinate every interest of the community to the interest of maintaining establishments so equipped as to be able to come into action at their full strength at any moment. To secure that great object tax was added to tax and debt to debt till even in a time of profound peace the people became subjected to some of the worst evils of war. There had been in the last century repeated instances in which the impoverishment of the subjects under these exactions had proved to have been a far more serious menace to the stability of the State than any to which it had ever been exposed from the attack of foreign foes. That was one method of preparing a people to bear the burden of war. It was a method pursued to this day by continental Powers and a method which we ourselves had been pursuing during the last few years. The second method was to reduce armaments in time of peace and to use their energies and resources in promoting the welfare of the great body of the people, in increasing their loyalty to the State, their confidence in it, and their affection for it. One thing was certain, we could not at the same time do this and follow the example of the continental Powers in their expenditure on armaments. Of the two great assets upon which we should have to rely in case of war surely a strong spirited people eager to support its Government in case of emergency was better than a great Navy maintained at the cost of the real welfare of the people. Supposing Germany reduced her armaments for the purpose of strengthening the life of her people, would her position among the nations of the world be lowered? Would any other nation be more likely to undertake an aggressive attack upon her? Suppose we reduced our expenditure on armaments for the express purpose of improving the education of our people, of mending the weak places in our social structure, of strengthening our energies and our staying power, should we then lose caste among the great nations of the world? No. And he based his opinion not on his own authority but on the authority of not the least patriotic, not the least far-seeing or the least manly of our statesmen of the last century. It was the opinion of Sir Robert Peel, of Lord John Russell, of Mr. Disraeli, and of Mr. Gladstone. It was an opinion they repeatedly expressed when opposing demands for an increase of armaments of the same character as those of which so much had been heard in recent years. It was an opinion which they prevailed upon this House to accept against the opinions of experts and panicmongers of their day. He could only express his regret that the Government had not thought it well to pursue the policy which was the traditional policy of this country up to the last fifteen years. He felt this regret so strongly that if no one else would do it he would move a reduction on Vote A and Vote 8 of the Estimates. He had a duty to perform to his constituents, who returned him to secure a real reduction in expenditure; and if necessary he would divide the House upon the question.

*Mr. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.) said that Labour Members were just as anxious as any other hon. Members of the House to retain a Navy of that character which would be a sure defence of our shores and commerce. He regretted that the reduction had been so small, however, because he was persuaded a greater reduction could be safely made and that it would be more in consonance with the best interests of the nation. Could they not have a clear definition of what was a two-Power standard, of what number of vessels of each particular class constituted a two-Power standard, so that everybody could understand it? If it was once understood where the two-Power standard commenced and where it finished, we could build up our Navy or reduce it as other countries extended or reduced their fleets. It had been clearly demonstrated by one hon. Member, by figures, that our Navy was not only of a two-Power, but in some cases of a four-Power standard, and speaking for the workers of this country he thought the time had come when a substantial reduction should be made. He protested against any Members suggesting that they were greater friends of the Navy than the Labour Members. Everyone in the House was a friend of the Navy. It was because he was a friend of the Navy that he ventured to say that it had now reached such a point that it was possible to have the reduction which many in the country desired. He noticed from the figures on page 8 of the Estimates that, as compared with 1904, we had a fighting force over and above that of 1904 which would practically be equal to an increase of half-a-dozen of a particular class of new battle ships, cruisers or destroyers, owing to the larger proportion of ships available. That ought to have some weight with the Government. He rose particularly to express his regret at the comparative smallness of the reduction in the Estimates, because he saw no hope of passing those measures of social reform which the House had unanimously decided on but could not undertake owing to the shortness of money. Only last session the House agreed on the desirability of an old-age pension scheme, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to declare that because of want of funds, not of want of sympathy, he was unable to promise to bring in a Bill. Therefore it seemed to him that unless they were prepared to put on increased taxation or to reduce the expenditure of the two great spending departments of the State it was hopeless to expect any great measure of social reform. He was prepared to face the logical position, and it was because he believed that, taking everything into consideration for the national welfare, they could safely agree to a larger and more substantial reduction than £500,000, or £1,500,000, or £2,000,000, that he respectfully protested against a greater decrease not having been provided for. Of what value was the Japanese alliance to us unless it was going to assist us in reducing the cost of our own fighting machine? We had accepted serious obligations and responsibilities under that alliance, yet we were to have no benefit in the form of reduced expenditure. He contented himself with entering his protest. He would not commit himself until he had heard the complete discussion, as to whether he would vote for the Motion which the hon. Member for Lynn Regis had on the Paper. It seemd to him that unless they brought some kind of pressure to bear on the House and the Government there would not be full appreciation of the fact that there was a taxpayers' side of the question as well as the side which had been spoken of by the hon. Members above the Gangway. He accepted the two-Power standard, he accepted the definition of it as given by the Prime Miniter and the ex-Prime Minister, and it seemed to him that they ought to go into the Conference at The Hague with the distinct understanding that the two-Power standard should be our basis so far as our Government was concerned, on condition that other nations did not infringe the margin of difference in our comparative positions, and that, with this condition agreed to, we should then be prepared to reduce our armaments. So long as that two-Power standard was accepted we should be able to arrange everything between the nations of the world, and to remove from the shoulders of the peoples of the respective countries the appalling burden of armaments which had made it imposible to obtain social reforms. It seemed to him that when other nations took into consideration the fact that we could build war vessels much more cheaply and much more quickly than they could, they would not enter into competition with us, but would regard as fair and reasonable our proposal as to a two-Power standard. He ventured respectfully to express regret that there was not a much more substantial decrease in the Estimates, because, in his judgment, it could safely be done, and until it was done, they would not get those social reforms on to the Statute-book of which the labouring clases stood so much in need.

*Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON expressed the hope that they would be allowed to go into Committee formally, and promised that there should be other opportunities of discussion.

*Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis), in submitting a Motion to the effect that the House affirmed its adherence to the two-Power standard of naval strength, as defined by successive Cabinets to mean that the annual shipbuilding programme should be so framed as to give the British Navy a margin of superiority over the two strongest naval powers in armoured ships and cruisers, said this was a distinct Motion which he intended to move, and therefore he could not agree to the right hon. Gentleman's request to allow it to lapse. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean had referred to certain views of his, but as he intended to confine his observations to the Motion, he would deal with the right hon. Baronet's remarks when they got into Committee. The justification of the Motion lay in the discussion they had heard. Some had supported and some had opposed the two-Power standard. He wanted to sift out what really was the opinion of the House, and what should be the future policy of the country. He did not think if they looked to the terms of the Motion that any apology for it was needed. The two-Power standard had existed now for some eighteen years; it was undoubtedly the Monroe doctrine of this country; it was the minimum standard, and we were not prepared in any way to go below it. We might go above it, and the Secretary to the Admiralty had pointed out that we might, in future, have to go beyond the three-Power standard; at any rate, the two-Power standard was the minimum. The latter part of the right hon. Baronet's speech had shown the tremendous danger to which this country was exposed. He had drawn a moving picture of the destruction of ships by mines, and there was the case of two battleships of the Japanese destroyed in that way in a single day. Therein lay the necessity for a substantial margin of naval strength. There had been several references in the debate to the statement of the Prime Minister on July 27th as to the two-Power standard.† He was asked with regard to it, whether he had communicated his views to the Board of Admiralty, and the answer was that they were quite aware of his views. The question of the two-Power standard was in a somewhat unsatisfactory state, and therefore it ought to be elucidated still further. Our thirty-two battleships were scattered in four different fleets; the German fleet of sixteen battleships was concentrated in one mass, and the fleet of the United States in another mass of sixteen battleships; and this combination of fully commissioned ships in his opinion was the stronger of the two. The Secretary to the Admiralty had rather misled the House when he said the two-Power standard applied to France and Russia only and was never intended to be applied to other Powers. The declaration made from both Front Benches had undoubtedly been that the two-Power standard applied to the two strongest Powers in the world. In 1889, Lord George Hamilton, then First Lord of the Admiralty, said—

> "The paramount idea underlying the utterances of those who in previous years have held my position and that of Prime Minister . . . . has been that our establishment should be on such a scale that it should at least be equal to the naval strength of any two other countries . . . . No amount of foresight or calculation can anticipate naval combinations and naval movements. For the purpose of meeting such unexpected blows we should have a considerable margin of reserve."

That view of Lord George Hamilton was practically embodied in the Resolution which he now submitted. But he had an equally strong declaration from the present Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who said that the two-Power standard must be taken to apply to any two Powers which had the largest navies. That was an emphatic declaration which applied to the two strongest Powers. Lord Selborne and Lord Goschen had made declarations on exactly similar lines, and they had both occupied the important post of First Lord of the Admiralty. The standard which had existed for eighteen years was practically the sheet anchor of British diplomacy. The two-Power standard undoubtedly brought our negotiations to a triumphant conclusion at the time of the Fashoda crisis, and it undoubtedly saved this country from a great European combination during the South African War. If they were willing to maintain the two-Power standard, he was quite convinced that they would carry his Motion unanimously. The two-Power standard had won bloodless victories in diplomacy, but he was afraid that it, like generals who won bloodless victories, did not receive the laurels which were its due and that the tendency was to render it mere lip homage. The practical outcome of adherence to the "Blue Water School" was that we had de ermined to take up disarmament in the first instance. They were assisted in that process by the loss of the "Montagu," and by the decision to put out of commission no fewer than thirteen battleships which would in future have maintenance crews of only three officers and sixty-one men. None of those thirteen battleships would be ready when war broke out. Four months after the Prime Minister made his great declaration at the Albert Hall the German Government introduced their Navy Bill of 1906 for £50,000,000. Now they had an article by the Prime Minister modelled on the same lines, which appeared recently in *The Nation*, and he felt sure that that article would be followed in the German Parliament by a fresh increase in German naval expenditure which would be discussed in a few weeks time, and that would be the fourth great increase in the navy sanctioned by the German Parliament, since the first Navy Bill of 1898. Recently a general election had taken place in Germany, and it had resulted in the defeat of the Party friendly to this country's policy. The German election had resulted in the triumph of the school of thought which passed the German Navy Bill the preamble of which ran—

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxii., 114–117.

> "Germany must have a Fleet of such strength that a war even against the mightiest naval power would involve risks threatening the supremacy of that power."

Of course that referred to Great Britain. Comparing the naval policy of Great Britain and Germany in 1904–5 and subsequent years, leaving out of account expenditure on naval works, he showed that in two years the Tory Government made a reduction of £5,020,000, while Germany made an increase of £2,297,000. The Government had now made a naval reduction of £1,427,000 while Prince Bülow was introducing a measure to increase the German Navy by £1,330,000. The British decrease had been £6,447,000, while the German increase had been £3,627,000. These were decreases in net estimates. But the Secretary to the Admiralty had shown that our decrease in gross estimates had been £8,000,000 for the three years, and against that had to be set the German increase of £3,627,000, apart from naval works in expansion of dockyards. Herr Bebel, the German Socialist leader, fought against German naval expansion. He declared that England would always lay down two ships for every one laid down by Germany. Our action proved him wrong and he had been rejected by the German people. The mandate of the German people was clearly to persist in the policy of naval expansion. What of our own mandate? The hon. Member for Northampton had told the Government that he was sick of mandates. He had conferred on the mandate theory the appropriate order from Northampton, "the order of the boot." But it was the essence of their case that they should see what had been done and how far it squared with Liberal opinion before the general election. He denied that they had received a mandate to cut down the Navy. The speeches of his political leaders before the general election were directed to reductions of Army expenditure and not of the Navy. The Prime Minister, in a speech made in November, 1904, stated that his desire was to see a strong Navy, with command of the sea, and that he did not desire to see the Navy reduced. He said—

> "We all desire to see a strong Navy, having full command of the sea. It is necessary for our position, for the nature and character of our Empire, for our immense trade, always occupying distant lands of commerce, as well as for the protection of our shores in this island. But one would think that so great an increase of Navy Estimates would be accompanied by a corresponding diminution of Army Estimates, because if we had the command of the sea; and our shores are therefore all but absolutely safe, there seems to be surely room for a large reduction in Army expenditure."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer made an emphatic speech on 21st February, 1902, in which he said—

> "There are two branches of National expenditure of the diminution of which I see no prospect, and for the diminution of which I have no desire. One is the money we spend on National education, and the other is the money we spend on our Fleet."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then proceeded to give excellent reasons for increasing the expenditure on the Navy, and for regarding all nations as our possible enemies, and he added—

> "The two-Power standard represents the *minimum* of safety; it is far the best form of insurance. This country expends thirty odd millions in connection with the Navy, which is a large sum, I know. I look upon it simply as a premium we pay to insure the ultimate safety not only of our commerce, but the safety of our shores and the very existence of our population in the face of dangers which we all hope may be remote, but against which it is our business to guard."

The Secretary of State for War, speaking at the Eighty Club in 1904, was equally emphatic, for in the course of his speech he said—

> "I want to see the British Navy still stronger than it is, a fighting instrument always ready to strike, for then it is almost certain it will not be called upon to strike."

The righ hon. Gentleman went down to Brighton on 8th December, 1906, and in a speech he delivered there said—

> "The expenditure on our Navy might be set against those foreign Powers who laid out their resources in taking two years of the best period of the lives of their young men for compulsory service."

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs speaking at the Eighty Club, in 1905, found fault with the late Government for having reduced the naval expenditure when they ought to have begun with the Army Estimates. Since that time there had been a further large reduction in the Naval expenditure. In all his election speeches he had urged that economies should be effected on the Army and not on the Navy. The last general election was fought on the cheap loaf, and he indulged in the usual literature about the big and little loaf, but did any hon. Member lead his constituents to believe that by that cry he meant a cheap loaf in time of peace and a famine loaf in war? What the electors wanted was a big loaf all the year round, both in peace and war. He adopted, at the last election, the motto of "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform," but he failed to see how they could secure peace without a strong Navy, and the more the Government reduced the naval margin of supremacy the more would every alarmist force them to provide home defences such as Cobden inveighed against in vain, and to incur greater expenditure. Before 1900 this country built in excess of requirements, but since the South African War we had been under-building. Since the South African war we had built thirteen fewer battleships than America and Germany combined. The hon. Member for Falkirk Burghs who made a number of comparisons, had carefully and skilfully avoided making any mention of the ships which were building. Obviously, in discussing a shipbuilding programme, it was necessary to consider what would be the position three years hence and not merely the position now. We built sixteen more ships than France and Germany in the fourteen years prior to the South African War. Since we wasted a large amount of money on that war we had laid down nine fewer ships than France and Germany. The ships we built then were becoming obsolete in their style of armour, which was not carried along the water line at the bow and stern. The French and German ships were all armoured on the water line. He did not think any naval officer would like, during an engagement, to be on a ship which was not so armoured. He knew it was the usual course to describe those who advocated expenditure on armaments as Jingoes. [An HON. MEMBER: "Quite right."] An hon. Member agreed. Those who boasted in the words of the Jingo song, "We've got the ships," were the hon. Members who wanted to cut down the Navy. He and his friends merely drew the attention of the country to the danger of the policy that was being adopted. He did not for a moment say that the present naval programme would involve the country in absolute danger, but it would involve the Liberal Party in a very much increased expenditure next year. They were only postponing the expenditure. Would hon. Members, who said that money was wanted for social reforms, state plainly that the Navy would never get back the money, because it would all be given to old-age pensions and other schemes? Nobody hoped to save £25,000,000 on the Navy. He begged to move.

MR. COWAN (Surrey, Guildford), in seconding the Motion, said it was essential that the House should make the declaration it contained in order that the position of the House of Commons and of the Government might be clearly defined. The strength of the Navy was not a Party question. It was not a question for experts only. Experts, he feared, only bewildered plain people by drawing the most varying conclusions from the same set of facts. The decisions of experts must be followed as to details in regard to such matters as the sort of ships which ought to be built and the disposition of the Fleets. But the relative strength of our Navy to the navies of other Powers was a political and not a technical question. Therefore he ventured to say something about it because it was one on which every Member of the House was, he thought, bound to have an opinion. It seemed obvious that there ought to be some standard of naval strength. He came to the House pledged to support the Government in maintaining our absolute naval supremacy. He readily admitted that our Naval force at the present time was ample in every way. He accepted the almost unvarying testimony of experts on that point. The position of the Prime Minister had been misrepresented. It had been stated that the right hon. Gentleman repudiated the two-Power standard, and it was believed that, in going into The Hague Conference shortly, the Government contemplated agreeing to drastic reductions in our forces. It did not depend on the action of other Powers, even if they were wise enough to accept the advice of our Prime Minister. We would not go into the Conference, proclaiming, as an hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House had suggested, that we intended to adhere to the two-Power standard. That was a matter for ourselves alone. We would go into the Conference with an enormous preponderance of naval power, and we would claim that all reductions made by other Powers should be proportionate. The Leader of the Opposition had referred to the fact that while we were going to the other Powers and saying that we had reduced our naval and military expenditure so much, we at the same time had not reduced the fighting power or efficiency of the forces. The right hon. Gentleman represented that to be insincere. If we had reduced expenditure on armaments and increased their efficiency, it was because that, under successive Governments, and especially the late Government, we had been wasting money and not getting value for it. Were they to be told that other Powers would not believe us when we said that we were prepared to make other reductions in the same proportion? He believed that other nations would not distrust us in that way. It was quite a mistake to say that, because to-day we were on terms of friendship with particular Powers, we could leave them out of sight in our calculations. We had formed friendships with the great French nation before now, but those friendships had evaporated and been succeeded by very regrettable relations. Once more the relations of the two countries were all that could be desired, but who would say it was impossible that those relations should change? And so with all naval Powers. We were bound to consider that every friend might become an enemy and every enemy a friend. Therefore, to make our preparations as if the friendly relations of to-day were always to continue was to gamble with the national safety. The Labour Party opposite, when they protested against the money spent on national defence in order that large funds might be available for social reform, failed to realise that what was involved in this matter was nothing less than the question of the destruction of our commerce and the reduction of our working-class population to destitution.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House affirms its adherence to the two-Power standard of naval strength, as defined by successive Cabinets to mean that the annual shipbuilding programme should be framed so as to give the British Navy a margin of superiority over the two strongest naval Powers in the number of efficient armoured ships intended to be used as battleships, together with such a superiority in the number of efficient cruisers as will enable them adequately to perform their work as scouts, look-out vessels, and commerce defenders in a war with the two strongest naval Powers.'"—(*Mr. Bellairs.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn rose to move this Amendment just after my right hon. friend in charge of the Estimates had appealed to the House to allow the Speaker to leave the Chair in order that the discussion might be continued in Committee. That is the usual course on such an occasion, and I feel that the appeal of my right hon. friend was a most reasonable one. In Committee there will be no restriction whatever on the opportunity for discussion; in fact there are more facilities then for full discussion of these Estimates and on naval policy generally than with the Speaker in the chair. I do not see what my hon. friend has gained by resisting the appeal of my right hon. friend, an appeal which appeared to be generally approved in every quarter of the House. He has made a most interesting speech, being a man peculiarly well informed on all these subjects. He has quoted a number of speeches of members of the Government; I do not know whether he honoured me in that way, but I do not invite him to do so. That could have been done in Committee. The only thing that could not have been done in Committee is to move an Amendment to the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair on the Navy Estimates. Such an Amendment is a Motion of want of confidence in the Government. Even if the Government agreed with its terms, and they do entirely agree with its spirit, they would be obliged to resist it, because it is their duty to forward the business of the House. I do not think my hon. friend has apprehended what would be the effect of his Motion, and I appeal to him to be content with the speech he has made and to withdraw his Resolution. The hon. Gentleman has put his view before the House, and he can do so again more fully if he choose in Committee.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): I regret very much that the Prime Minister should have treated this Motion in the manner he has done. I venture to dissent from the view that the Amendment must be regarded as a vote of want of confidence in the Government. Surely it is possible for the Government, without prolonging debate, to place on record this considered opinion of the House, and then at once set up again the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair. I cannot believe the debate will be shortened by rejecting a Motion of this kind when once it has been placed formally before the House and we are entitled to express an opinion upon it. It would be a grievous thing if a Motion of this kind became a subject of division in the House when in substance we are all agreed. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to accept the Amendment.

*CAPTAIN HERVEY (Bury St. Edmunds) said it was well known in the House that he was an upholder of the two-Power standard as understood by naval men, and as would be put forward by the Lords of the Admiralty had they the chance of expressing their opinion in the House. He was sorry that the Prime Minister had last session thrown any doubt on our position in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that he believed in the two-Power standard in spirit, but what naval men wanted was a two-Power standard in ships and men. The Prime Minister had given them a two-Power standard in neither ships nor men in any of his speeches. He had in the Estimates cut down the Shipbuilding Vote and, what was infinitely worse, had reduced the number of men by 1,000. The two-Power standard must be a two-Power standard of ships properly manned by efficient men. He thought the Amendment ought to be supported unless the Prime Minister would agree not only in spirit but in practice to the two-Power standard.

MR. BELLAIRS said that in answer to the appeal of the Prime Minister he would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said he would like to make a few remarks in regard to the two-Power standard. He thought that the debate had been most useful, because it had displayed the anxiety which had been caused by the statements of the Prime Minister last July and of the Secretary to the Admiralty that afternoon, in which they had seemed to wish to put a different construction on the two-Power standard from that generally held. They had heard some speeches that afternoon which would not meet with much popularity in the country; and he could quote many speeches made by hon. Gentlemen opposite showing that they would not welcome the reduction of expenditure on the Navy. The Secretary for War said in 1902 that the country could not afford to diminish the Estimate, which amounted to only 3 per cent. of the estimated value of our commerce, and the hon. Member for Cardiff said in 1905, when the Estimates were more than now, that he did not desire any decrease in the expenditure on the Navy. The question was whether they were keeping up the two-Power standard of the new type. All were agreed that the change to the new type had altered the position. They could not tell until war actually took place as to what effect these big vessels would have in a sea battle, or whether they would be put out of action by a former class of vessels. If that were the case it was all-important that the two-Power standard should be kept up. A most interesting article had appeared in *The Times* that morning as to ship building. He had gone carefully into the figures as to the number of ships which were being built by Japan, the United States, France, Germany, and England. All the vessels mentioned were larger than the "Dreadnought," some of them much larger. Japan would have four of the new type, the United States four, France six, Germany five, and we should have six. Our position would consequently fall below the two-Power standard with regard to those large vessels. There was no doubt the lesson taught by the experience of the Russo-Japanese War was that it was the large battleships and the large guns with the long range which gave Admiral Togo the great advantage of being able to keep the Russian Navy inside Port Arthur. He was therefore glad to see that the Prime Minister had modified the opinion which he expressed last year. [Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN dissented]. He noticed the Prime Minister shook his head, but in July last he told them that it was preposterous to adhere to the old ideas of the two-Power standard, and said they must have regard to the conditions which prevailed from time to time. In his opinion, it would be ridiculous if that principle were admitted. They all knew that friendships and alliances came about between Powers and individuals one day and disappeared the next, and that, although our relations with a foreign Power might be all right for the time being, they might easily be disturbed. It would be absurd, therefore, to base our Fleet upon the circumstances which existed at a particular time. He desired to call attention to the proportion of ships to be built under contract as compared with those which were to be built in the Royal dockyards. He found that in the last few years the proportion of ships which had been given out to contract was much smaller than formerly, and that the proportion built in the Royal dockyards was much larger. This year it was proposed to lay down two ships of the "Dreadnought" type, and one more if The Hague Conference was not successful. Two of those ships were to be laid down in the Royal dockyards and one alone was to go to private contractors. He thought that was hardly a fair proportion. It had to be remembered that the private yards were a great national asset. They were built for the purpose of providing ships when the nation wanted them, and it would be a great misfortune to discourage the expenditure of capital upon them. The number of ships given out to private contract as contrasted with the number of ships built in the dockyards had of late years very much decreased, and he appealed to the Admiralty to take care that orders were dealt out with even-handed justice as between the Royal dockyards and the private yards. Finally, he wished to impress upon the House the great importance of not making this question of the supremacy of the Fleet a Party question, because our very existence depended upon it. Our vast Empire extended all over the world, and we occupied one-fourth of the land in the world. Seventy-five per cent. of our bread stuffs and 40 per cent. of our meat had to be imported, and our mercantile marine equalled in tonnage that of all the rest of the world put together. Then, again, quite apart from protecting our commerce, a strong Navy was a most effective weapon in war. There was no doubt that our Navy kept "hands off" during the South African War, and it had been proved over and over again in history that the country which had won in any conflict was that one which had a strong Navy. He had great pleasure in supporting the view expressed by the Prime Minister, but congratulated the hon. Member for King's Lynn, although he had withdrawn his Amendment, on having extracted a satisfactory explanation from the Government.

The hon. Member having resumed his seat,

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but

*MR. SPEAKER pointed out that there were still a few minutes left, and he had no doubt the House would be ready to agree to the Motion to go into Committee before a quarter past eight.

*MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he did not want to detain the House for more than a moment, but he could not help thinking the Prime Minister would be one of the first to regret that he had not seen his way to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for King's Lynn. His refusal to do so would inevitably be misunderstood. Taken together with his recent article in *The Nation* and his utterances during that debate, his refusal must be misunderstood in the country. Only that night, when the Leader of the Opposition asked if he upheld the two-Power standard—he had made a note of it at the time—the Prime Minister said, "Yes, as a rule."

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I said "as a rule of action."

*MR. COURTHOPE was glad to hear that the qualification was now further qualified. [SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: "No, no."] He quite appreciated the right hon. Gentleman's contention. He had misunderstood him, and he was sure if he had misunderstood hearing, those who read his speech would misunderstand still more. On another point the right hon. Gentleman had asked incredulously if we were to maintain the standard when we were in close alliance with other Powers. That must inevitably be misunderstood, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take some opportunity of removing the risk of misunderstanding which would inevitably occur in the country if nothing more definite was said.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said that if the Prime Minister would undertake that full opportunity would be afforded of discussing the naval policy on Vote A and Vote 1 he would advise his hon. friends not to divide against the Motion.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Certainly.

Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. EMMOTT (Oldham), in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1908, including 18,595 Royal Marines."

*MR. COURTHOPE said there were one or two points which he would like to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty. One was about the saving of £450,000. As far as he could make out, the decrease, small as it was, was only created by leaving over some £438,000 for the Works Department upon the Estimates of next year, and the real decrease was only £12,000. He might have misread the Memorandum, but that was the meaning of it to his mind, and he hoped that an explanation would be given of what that £438,000 carried over meant. In the Memorandum about the education of naval cadets there was an appeal to county and other public authorities. Surely, as the late Civil Lord of the Admiralty had stated, if it was the policy of the Government to make the education cheap it should be done by them, and not by issuing appeals of this kind to public authorities, who already had quite enough on their hands. There was a further point he wished to ask about torpedo craft in home waters.

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the clock, further proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

ARMAGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL (BY ORDER).

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.) in moving the rejection of the Bill, said he was taking that course at the request of a large number of his constituents who believed that their interests as traders and ratepayers would be seriously prejudiced if the proposals contained in this measure received the sanction of Parliament. The Bill was promoted by the Armagh Urban District Council, and it contained three separate proposals. In the first place, it proposed to empower the urban council to acquire compulsorily the market rates of the city, which were now in the hands of a body of trustees; in the second place, it contained a provision enabling the council to exercise greater control over the supply of milk to the inhabitants; and in the third place, it proposed to relieve the council from an obligation to pay a sum of £150 a year towards the maintenance of main roads running out from the city into the surrounding rural districts. The main purpose of the Bill was contained in the first of those proposals. In comparison with that, the other matters were of less importance, but they were objected to on various grounds, and their presence in the Bill did not weaken the case for the total rejection of the measure. On the face of it, perhaps, hon. Members might be disposed to regard with sympathy provisions to enable the local authority, responsible for the health of the district, to exercise more effective control over the milk supply. Purity of milk and its freedom from contamination was a matter of great importance in relation to public health, but however desirable it might be to endow the local authority with adequate powers to safeguard the public in that particular, he submitted that any extension of authority which might be necessary should be granted only after careful inquiry, and be made applicable by general enactment to all public bodies who were responsible for the administration of the laws relating to public health. The Armagh Urban Council asked for special powers in this respect in a Bill which was primarily introduced for another purpose altogether. He contended that they ought not to be granted this exceptional authority unless they satisfied Parliament that they could be safely trusted to exercise the power fairly as regarded every part of the community. It was a fact that he thought it his duty to mention that in the district which would be affected by the milk provisions, a strong feeling existed that the Armagh Urban Council could not be relied upon to apply the powers impartially and with a single eye to the public good. He did not, however, base the case for the rejection of the Bill upon the milk provisions or upon the third of the proposals in the Bill. The question of the road contribution was somewhat complicated, and he did not propose to detain the House by attempting to explain it. It was a comparatively small matter, but he thought he ought to mention that the Armagh Rural District Council, who had been credited with the £150 paid annually by the urban council, naturally very much resented the attempt of the urban council to get rid of the obligation. Had it been competent for the rural council to oppose the Bill, they would certainly have petitioned to be heard against it in Committee. They were, however, able to act only through the County Council of Armagh, and, although the majority of that body were in favour of opposing the Bill, the resolution authorising opposition was not carried by a sufficient number of votes to satisfy the statutory requirements. It appeared that the Local Government Board decided that the cost of opposing the Bill could not be levied upon the area of the rural district, but must be spread over the entire county, and members of the county council representing outside districts were reluctant to vote for incurring the expense in a matter in which their constituents were not directly interested. It was not necessary for his purpose that he should offer any opinion upon the reasonableness, or otherwise, of that particular proposal of the urban council. It was only due to the rural council, however, that he should point out that they considered they would be unjustly treated if the urban council were authorised to discontinue this payment of £150 a year. Now he came to what was, after all, the main purpose of the Bill, and that was the proposal to empower the urban council to acquire compulsorily the tolls and market rights of the city. He did not wish to detain the House at undue length, but in order that hon. Members might obtain a clear idea of the question at issue, it was necessary for him to explain the present position of affairs in relation to the tolls. The market rights of the city were formerly the property of the Archbishop of Armagh, who leased them to private individuals. The markets were conducted in that way during the 17th and 18th centuries and down to the year 1821. In that year there was a movement in Armagh for the improvement of the market, and a trust was formed by a number of the principal inhabitants for the purpose of acquiring the tolls, and managing the markets in the general interest of the city. The terms of that trust had been faithfully carried out. Since the year 1825 the tolls committee, who were entrusted with the conduct of the markets, had expended nearly £6,000 on improvements in the city. Among other works they had provided funds for building a new post office; they had also expended upwards of £4,000 in extending and improving the market accommodation. As regarded the management of markets by the tolls committee, there had been, so far as he was aware, no complaint whatever. On the contrary, the farmers who brought their produce into the markets to sell, and those who attended them for the purpose of buying, had been, and were at the present time, perfectly satisfied with the management of the tolls committee. Why then did the majority of the urban council wish to disturb the existing arrangements which had worked so well during all these years? So far as he could gather, the only ground on which they came to Parliament for these powers was the general principle that markets ought to be under municipal control. He had no doubt that many hon. Members would approve that principle. He submitted, however, that Armagh was a case where an exception was justified. He looked upon the matter entirely from the point of view of one who desired to promote the best interests of the city, which was in the Parliamentary division that he represented. He was intimately acquainted with all the local conditions, and he said without any hesitation that the result of transferring the control of the markets from the tolls committee to the present urban council would be to diminish commercial prosperity in the city and inflict serious loss upon the ratepayers. It seemed to him that the first requisite for the successful management of markets was that they should be conducted by experienced and capable men of business. The tolls committee, who now conducted the markets, comprised the largest buyers in the markets, and the principal merchants in the city. Their services were given entirely voluntarily, but having a substantial stake in the commercial prosperity of the city they were naturally interested in promoting the success of the markets in every possible way. The fact could not be denied that the markets had been conducted by them for the benefit of the whole community. Upon the other hand, the majority of the urban council had little or no interest in the markets—a few members of that body were business men, but they were in a hopeless minority, and, under the political conditions which ruled in Armagh, they would be allowed no voice whatever in the control of the markets if the council were to acquire them. The House would obtain some idea of the relative standard of the members of the tolls committee and the majority of the urban council if he gave some particulars of the valuation of their property for rating purposes. He found that the valuation of the members of the tolls committee amounted in the aggregate to £500, or an average of £62. On the other hand, the valuation of the majority of the urban council totalled only £178, or an average of £15. One of the members of the urban council had no rating in the city at all, and four out of the twelve were rated upon a valuation of less than £8. It must be evident from the most cursory examination of those figures that the qualifications of the present tolls committee for managing the markets were infinitely superior to those of the members of the urban council who were anxious to assume control of the undertaking. It was a fact which ought to have great weight with the House that the Bill was not approved by a majority of the inhabitants of Armagh. It had been promoted by a majority only of the urban council, and the minority of that body who opposed were themselves substantial and capable men, who were supported in their opposition by at least one-half of the population who paid quite three-fourths of the entire rates of the city. He did not ask the House to accept his unsupported assertion of that fact. Last year when a similar Bill was promoted, a *plébiscite* of the electors was taken, with the result that a clear majority of the electors disapproved of the proposals of the urban council. The number who voted against the Bill was 622, and only 550 supported it. That result was obtained after a record poll, 1,172 votes being cast out of 1,230 on the register. In spite of that emphatic verdict the urban council had chosen to promote this Bill in defiance of the express wishes of more than one-half the people of the city, including all the principal inhabitants. He asked the House to consider whether, upon any ground of urgent public necessity, they would be justified in forcing this Bill upon the city, in the face of such an emphatic expression of opinion that it was not wanted. The proposal came from a majority of the council who did not represent the wishes of a majority of the ratepayers. If that were disputed he pointed to the *plébiscite* of last year. But in addition to that, he ventured to suggest that it would be reasonable to submit the Bill as a definite issue to the electors before it was further proceeded with. An opportunity for obtaining the opinion of the ratepayer upon the scheme would occur in January next, when the triennial election of the urban council would take place. There was no urgency about the proposal, and he felt sure Parliament would like to be assured that the council in putting forward the scheme really had a majority of the ratepayers at their back. There was another proposal in the Bill to which he would invite the serious attention of the House. The urban council were asking for an unlimited extension of their borrowing powers and the removal of the restrictions placed upon the borrowing powers of the council by the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878. At the present time those borrowing powers had been exercised nearly to their full extent, and he submitted that the circumstances of the city as well as the character of the majority of the urban council made it very undesirable that unlimited power of increasing the local indebtedness should be granted by Parliament. The restrictions embodied in the Public Health Act of Ireland were enacted by Parliament with the express object of preventing local authorities from borrowing more than double the rateable value of their respective districts. That was undoubtedly a wise provision intended for the protection of the ratepayers, and it ought not to be abrogated unless the strongest possible reasons could be advanced. In this case the effect of transferring the markets to the urban council would certainly be a considerable increase in the local rates. There existed the most urgent grounds for refusing the unlimited borrowing powers which were asked for. As the Member for the division in which the city of Armagh was situated, he opposed the Bill on its merits. If it were sent to Committee a great deal of expense would be incurred in opposing it and also in defending it, the cost of which would rest very heavily on the ratepayers of Armagh. In no circumstances could the acquisition of the markets by the present urban council result in any advantage to the city, and it was because he was convinced that it was for the best interests of the inhabitants that the control of the markets should remain in the hands of the present tolls committee that he moved the rejection of the Bill.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.), in seconding the Amendment, said the case for the rejection of the Bill had been so clearly, eloquently, and, he thought, impartially, presented by the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh that it must have convinced nearly every Member. Even on the usually impassive features of the Attorney-General there was a kind of assent given to the arguments of his hon. friend as he proceeded. He himself had been associated with the London County Council for nine years, and he would be one of the very last to offer any opposition to anything advocated by a local body, which was usually the best exponent of local wants, unless there were very exceptional circumstances. But, as the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh had assured the House, there were very exceptional circumstances in this case. There was a conflict as to these markets and tolls. A very sensible thing had been done. A *plébiscite* of the people was taken, and the result showed a majority against the council. Therefore it was a fair thing to say, after such a vote had been taken, after such a challenge had been given by the council and answered as it had been by the ratepayers, that it would be wise and reasonable to wait for the next election and get a second verdict, though he would have thought the council ought to have accepted the first verdict of the ratepayers instead of trying to flout the will of the people, as they were proposing to do. Here they had a moribund council defying the known will of the people, and he thought he could appeal with confidence to the instincts of hon. Members on the other side, who were always talking about the will of the people, to defend the expressed will of the people against a council which was endeavouring to defeat the people's wishes. He had, therefore, great pleasure in seconding the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Lonsdale.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.) said he would have thought that on a question on which depended the well-being of the majority of the ratepayers of Armagh, they might at least have had the spectacle of a Minister representing the Irish Local Government Board getting up and having the courage to tell them what the Board were going to do in the matter. On such occasions they generaly had a statement from a responsible Minister as to what the action of the Irish Government was going to be, but the Attorney-General remained silent as if in pursuance of a compact with hon. Members below the gangway; or was it an understood thing that the Bill was to be voted through without discussion, without a word from the Members who objected to it, because they had come to an arrangement with the Irish Local Government Board which up to now had been supposed to be an independent Department. In future one would be led to consider that Department under the present Government as controlled by the wishes of hon. Members below the gangway. He really thought the House ought to have some idea as to the position of this supposed impartial authority, but the Attorney-General sat as if he had no intention of taking the House into his confidence. He had noticed that when unanswerable cases were brought forward from the quarter of the House in which he sat the Government acted with great discretion. They did not attempt to reply, but simply voted them down. Here was a case where the majority of the people of Armagh wanted one thing and the urban council as a dying effort were trying to do another by running a Bill through with the aid of the Government majority and of Members below the gangway. The hon. Member for Newry had his arrangement with the Government, and therefore he did not trouble to get up to speak when he had the chance. He had known other Bills under which local bodies wanted power, notably in the case of Rathmines, and the House was well aware what the hon. Member for Newry said in regard to that particular Bill. On that occasion he said that he would not be a party to a Bill which proposed to confer on one set of people powers and privileges to the detriment of another set of people. The trustees of the Armagh tolls had carried on their work without fee or reward for the last fifty years, but the work was now to be taken from them by means of a silent compact with the Government. The Attorney-General for Ireland did not dare to get up and say a word in favour of fair play, and by his conduct as the representative of the Administration and of law and justice in Ireland he was going far to dispel the idea that the present Irish Administration acted impartially. He hoped the Attorney-General would speak without remembering the spur that had been applied to him. It was a very unfortunate thing that such an instrument was necessary to bring the Government to its feet in regard to such a monstrous injustice as this Bill proposed. There was no public necessity for the measure, and no attempt had been made to show that the present trustees had carried on the markets unsatisfactorily. On the contrary, thev had done their duty well and the markets were flourishing, and every penny derived from them was being devoted to the welfare of the town. Hon. Members below the gangway did not appear to care what happened to the town. If the Urban Council of Armagh got the power to manage these markets and there happened to be a loss, upon whom would the loss fall? Not upon the urban council, but upon the majority of the ratepayers, who were against this scheme. It was an easy thing to say to the House of Commons, "Legislate for us, and if there is a deficiency it is going to come from the very people who are objecting." No doubt those who were opposing the measure would be told that they were bigoted, but that was the usual answer to the desires of an Irish industrial town which simply wanted to be let alone. He did not think there was a single hon. Member, whatever his politics might be, who would deny that the ratepayers were the people who ought to be considered in the matter. This was a question quite above Party politics, and the ratepayers who had petitioned against the Bill ought to be allowed to put their case before the Committee. What had the promoters of the Bill done? They had actually objected to the ratepayers appearing before a Committee in any shape or form. The Attorney-General for Ireland knew all about this, and yet he sat silent. For what reason did the House suppose that a majority of the dissenting ratepayers desired to appear before the Committee? Because it was simply the essence of fair play that both sides should be heard, but in spite of this, with the assistance of the Attorney-General, the Bill was to be forced through the House of Commons. He could assure the House that that would not be done without a strong protest on the part of those who happened to know how the Bill was being wire-pulled and gerrymandered through with the assistance of the Attorney-General. When it came to getting a small Party advantage all considerations of justice appeared to go. The question was one of disturbing an institution which had worked well and with advantage to everybody concerned for fifty years, and it was being done in order to achieve a wretched little Party gain. He wished to associate himself with his hon. friend who had laid the matter so fairly and impartially before the House. The hon. Member for Mid. Armagh had many interests of his own county at stake, and as a representative of the next county he was proud to be associated with the hon. Member and to take his share in protesting against this wretched political injustice and the cowardly, unprecedented action of the Attorney-General in regard to the matter.

*THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange) said the hon. Member first charged him with being entirely under the control of hon. Members opposite and then with being afraid to speak upon this measure. He wished to say that all along he had intended to speak; in fact he had come down to the House with that object. The reason he had not spoken before was that he thought it was only courteous to wait until he had heard the case against the Bill before replying. Apparently the hon. Member for North Armagh thought he should reply before having heard the case. The hon. Member had said a good deal about New Tipperary and Rathmines, but he had said very little about the Bill before the House. He had listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh, in which he put the case for the opposition to the Bill as strongly as it could be put, and the conclusion he had come to was that the House should certainly give the Bill a Second Reading. The hon. Member said that as a rule markets should be under municipal control.

MR. LONSDALE said that what he stated was that hon. Members might have sympathy with the principle of municipal authorities having control of the markets, but that Armagh might be considered an exception to that rule.

*MR. CHERRY said that if the hon. Member thought the principle of municipal authorities having control of markets was a bad one he would accept his statement, but he did not think the House would agree with him. On the contrary he thought that three-fourths of the Members of the House would be ready to contend that markets ought to be under the control of the municipal authority. In 1888 a Royal Commission inquired into the question of markets, and it sat in Armagh. Evidence was taken in that county, and it was urged that the control of the markets should be transferred to local bodies. The Royal Commission, appointed moreover by a Conservative Government and not by the miserable crew now in office, in its final Report actually recommended the transfer of all markets into the hands of the local authorities. The main provision of this Bill only sought to carry into effect that recommendation. They were told that Armagh was an exception, but he had listened in vain for any explanation. But although no reason had been stated it was easy to infer that it was because Armagh District Council was composed of men of different politics from those of hon. Members opposite. That was the whole thing in a nutshell. The hon. and learned Member for Mid. Armagh had actually given notice of Motion asking that the consideration of the Bill should be postponed till after another election, in 1908, when he hoped he would succeed in getting the council Unionist. Then the hon. and learned Member and his friends would come forward and support the Bill, for the principle seemed to be that a local body which was Unionist might have control, but a local body which was Nationalist must not. He might say on behalf of the Government that they were of opinion that local authorities, whether Unionist or Nationalist, should have control. They thought that the body now in control in Armagh represented the city of Armagh and was entitled to speak for Armagh.

MR. MOORE: What about Rathmines?

*MR. CHERRY said the Rathmines Bill did not propose to deal with the domestic affairs of Rathmines, but to extend the boundaries. This was a Bill dealing with Armagh City and the management of the affairs of Armagh. The representatives of Armagh were in favour of the Bill and promoted it. Why should not the House give it a Second Reading and send it to a Committee? They were told that the members of the council were a very poor lot, and that the average valuation of the Committee was much higher. He did not think that argument would carry much weight with the House. The average valuation of Members of the House of Commons was much less than that of Members of the House of Lords, and the hon. Member who advanced that argument should therefore be in favour of the abolition of the House of Commons. Another argument against the Bill was that it gave the local authority the control of the milk supply, and that the local authority could not be relied upon to exercise its powers impartially. Why not? Because it was a Nationalist body. A Conservative body could be at once allowed. It seemed to him, however, that the council made a strong case in favour of the Bill. In 1906 there was a very serious typhoid epidemic in Armagh, traceable to bad milk, and he thought it very natural that the council of Armagh, representing the poor as well as the rich, should seek to have control of the milk supply. That was one of the objects to which hon. Members opposite objected, simply and solely because the council happened to be a Nationalist body. He did not think it was necessary to detain the House any longer. He thought the feeling of the House would be very strongly in favour of the Bill, and for the very reasons stated by the hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh himself.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL (Dublin University) said he did not intend to occupy much of the time of the House, but only to call the attention of English Members to the moral of the debate, and to the way in which the Government regarded the administration of affairs in Ireland. He would remind the House that last year the urban district council of Rathmines brought in a Bill which in the previous year passed Committees both of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords, but which fell through owing to its final stage being reached just before the adjournment, though its principle had been adopted and ratified in both Houses. When the Bill was brought in again last year it was opposed on the First Reading, on the sole ground that it was promoted by a district mainly composed of Unionist electors. What was the attitude on that occasion of the Attorney-General, who had proclaimed himself such an admirer of local authorities' having administration of their own affairs? He certainly did not support the Bill or speak in the debate. He believed the Attorney-General went out of the House. He certainly did not vote in favour of the Bill. His present colleague, the Chief Secretary, actually went into the lobby and voted against the Bill. No objection was urged against the Bill except the one he had stated. The present Bill was brought in for a small matter, namely, the acquisition of the market tolls belonging to the important town of Armagh. In an exceedingly able and temperate speech the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh, in which the town was situated, had informed the House that the majority of the ratepayers, as the result of a vote taken on the question, had decided against the proposal to hand over the tolls to the local authority. He admitted that that was not conclusive, but on the other hand he thought the House would agree that it was a very strong argument against what he thought in ordinary cases was and ought to be the rule, namely, that everything else being equal the municipal authority should have the controlling power over such matters as markets and market tolls. But the town of Armagh was exceptional as had been pointed out so clearly and exhaustively by the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh. It was peculiar in this respect, that the administration of the tolls had been for nearly a century by chosen persons of the ratepayers. They had administered their trust faithfully and well and to the satisfaction of those attending the market. There had been no complaint or attack from any quarter. In view of the fact that when on the eve of the introduction of the Bill the ratepayers learned that it was proposed to take the market administration out of the hands of those gentlemen and to hand it over to a fluctuating body like the municipal council, they decided against the proposal, surely it was not unreasonable to ask the House to say that they should wait until next January and let it come before the electors, not as a political question, but as a financial question? It did not affect Unionist ratepayers in a different way from Nationalist ratepayers. It was a question of finance affecting the rates of the city, and in that light alone it ought to be regarded. He wished to emphasise the extraordinary and peculiar departure taken by the Irish Government to-night from the course taken twelve months ago, when a sanitary Bill was introduced by a Unionist council and they were told that the Bill should not be allowed to pass on account of that objection. On that occasion the Irish Government and those representing it entered into a conspiracy of silence, but testified to their views by joining hon. Members below the gangway by voting against the Bill. The House was now asked to postpone this Bill until after the elections in January next when the ratepayers of Armagh might be trusted to determine the matter. not from the miserable point of view of Party politics, but from the necessity of the town itself, apart altogether from the effect it would have upon their own pockets. If the speculation turned out a failure it would not affect the members of the urban district council. The people who would be injured would be, not merely the ratepayers themselves, but also those who had been in the habit of frequenting the market and using it for the purpose of their business. He would have great pleasure in supporting the Amendment.

MR. MOONEY (Newry) said the speech of the hon. Member for North Armagh in moving the rejection of the Bill was the strongest that could be made in favour of sending the measure upstairs. The question involved was surely one that ought to be decided by a Committee. The hon. Member for North Armagh said he represented the largest ratepayers in the town of Armagh. He understood that the hon. Member represented the toll commissioners of whom there were only eight. Two of them had already voted for a Bill of this kind. One of them had no property at all, and had signed a trust deed for the benefit of his creditors. Another had no business in the town, and only held one debenture in the tolls. There was an overwhelming majority of the ratepayers in favour of the Bill.

MR. LONSDALE said that a poll had been taken, and the result was a vote against the Bill.

MR. MOONEY said that his answer to that was that the ratepayers of Armagh were represented by the urban council which had passed a unanimous resolution in favour of the Bill, and no petition had been presented on behalf of the ratepayers against it. The hon. Gentleman seemed to have forgotten that in 1880 the Unionist town council of Armagh came to the conclusion that the town council was the proper body to administer the markets. In 1882 they came to the same conclusion. The Local Government Board, in 1888, sent a Commission to inquire into the matter, and that Commission decided that the town council should have the control of the markets; and in 1904 the town council gave notice to bring in a Bill to acquire the market rights. The hon. Member had made great play of the circumstance that a poll was taken last year against the Bill. He did not wish to deny the fact; but it was a most extraordinary poll. Circulars were issued by the Unionist Association to all the out-voters asking them to vote, and in that way the voting was influenced. The circulars, which were the most extraordinary ever issued even by the Unionists, stated that if the Bill were passed the property of the Unionists in the town would be destroyed; and that the ground set apart for sports and games would be lost. Those were the statements on which the hon. Gentleman had obtained his votes in the poll against the Bill. The hon. Member for Mid. Armagh had given building leases in the town of Armagh which contained certain curious conditions about bigotry, which had excited a great deal of talk.

MR. LONSDALE asked whether the hon. Member made that statement within his own knowledge or on the authority of others.

MR. MOONEY said that he could not say that the leases in question were in the hon. Member's own name, but he was the responsible party for them.

MR. T. L. CORBETT asked the Deputy-Speaker whether an hon. Member who made a deliberate insinuation against another hon. Member, which insinuation the latter denied, ought not to withdraw the statement.

*MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER said that there was no imputation against the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh, but the remark of the hon. Member for Newry did seem to be a little irrelevant to the Bill.

MR. MOONEY said he did not wish to reflect upon the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh, but he regarded the interruption of the hon. Member for Down as about as relevant as most of his interruptions. What they asked by this Bill was that the House should give to the Corporation of Armagh the same powers as were given to every other municipality in the country.

*CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) said he rose with some reluctance to take part in the debate, but he must confess that after listening to the speeches made by the Attorney-General and the hon. Member for Newry, it was evident that the last thing they desired was to discuss a Bill of such importance on its merits. Behind the Bill and its clauses and those speeches there was a deep meaning. How those who supported the Bill reconciled their speeches with the speeches and the votes which they gave last year on a similar occasion, he did not know. The arguments against the Bill had been straight to the point, but they had been howled down because some hon. Members below the gangway did not wish the truth to be known. The hon. Member for Newry had made a base insinuation against the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh, but it had nothing to do with the Bill, and in fact, there was not a single word of truth in it. "Oh, oh."

MR. MOONEY asked the Deputy-Speaker whether it was in order to charge an hon. Member with making a statement in which there was not a single word of truth ?

* MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said that if the hon and gallant Gentleman meant that the hon. Member for Newry was stating what he knew to be untrue he was not entitled to use the phrase and should withdraw it.

* CAPTAIN CRAIG said he did not intend to do anything more than to defend his hon. friend the Member for Mid. Armagh. [" Withdraw."] What he wished to say was that the hon. Member for Newry had been misinformed, but he bowed at once to the ruling of the Deputy-Speaker. Perhaps the House would allow him to say what the Bill really meant, and what would happen if the advice of the Attorney-General for Ireland were taken. No one had so far suggested that the toll proprietors had been making an undue profit out of the tolls, or had been in any way unjust or had administered the property in any partisan or improper spirit. On the contrary, they appeared to have carried out their duties remarkably well, considering the modest sum represented by the debentures, only some £2,170. If the Bill were allowed to go upstairs it would lead to great expenditure, which would fall upon the ratepayers or traders. He had calculated that the amount of money which would be necessary to pass the Bill into law and redeem the debentures would be £5,000. That at 5 per cent. would represent £250, which would have to go upon the rates, whereas the interest upon the debentures at the present time was only £115. That meant that £135 additional would have to go upon the rates, which sum would be placed upon the ratepayers or traders by the proposal of the Attorney-General. It seemed to him a lamentable thing for the House without better evidence before it to send the Bill upstairs. The House should take a strong line and allow a few months to elapse before a decision was come to. In that way the issue would go before the constituency and the House would not attempt by their influence to make up the minds of the people of Armagh for them. As a matter of fact, at a previous election the people of Armagh had by a large majority expressed their mind as already made up that this Bill should not go through. He could assure Home Rule Members below the gangway that the time would certainly come when they would be sorry for their action, and they would see that there was truth and justice in Ireland which would come to the front in the end. The present attitude of the Nationalists showed that they were afraid of that consummation.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 243 ; Noes, 67. (Division List No. 35.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Armitage, R.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, SirJ.Williams(Devonp'rt
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, SirJ.H.(Essex,Romfrd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Billson, Alfred
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner, RtHn.SirJ.T.(Chesh.)
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.

Cameron, Robert
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, SirWm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Corbett,CH.(Sussex, E.Grnist'd
Cornwall, Sir Ediwn A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, MajorE.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Frank (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Samuel T.
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Ginnell, L.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hardie, J.Keir(MerthyrTydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.
Leese,Sir JosephF.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(FalkirkB'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down. S.
MacVeigh, Chas. (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kean, John
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Marks, G.Croydon (Launceston
Marnham F. J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Priestly, W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Reddy, M.
Redmond,John E. (Waterford)
Rodmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n)
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs)
Robertson, Sir G.Scott(Bradf'd
Robinson, S.
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton undr.-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strauss, E. A. (Abindgon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, DavidAlfred(Merthyr
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset.E
Tillett, Jouis Lohn
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Waldron, Laurence Ambrose
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Ward,W.Dudley(Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Wason, JohnCathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh, N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St.Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. M'Killop and Captain Donelan.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn. Sir Alex F.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Ashley, W. W.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hervey, F. W. F. (Bury S. Edm'ds
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Liddell, Henry
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Montgomery, H. G.
Moore, William
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield Ecclesall)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Lonsdale and Mr. Charles Craig.

Main Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 238 ; Noes 73. (Division List No. 36.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Armitage, R.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Jospeh A. (Finsbury, E.
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carylon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonprt
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Billson, Alfred
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Cameron, Robert
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras)
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Frank (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Samuel T.
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Ginnell, L.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred

Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras,E)
Leese,Sir Joseph F(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeigh, Chas. (Donegal, E.)
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Kean, John
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Marks, G. Croydon(Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Nuttall, Harry
O’Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O’Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O’Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O’Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O’Dowd, John
O’Kelly, James (RoscommonN
O’Malley, William
O’Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinb’gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford,E.
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Reddy, M.
Redmond,John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas(W.Monm’th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh’mptn
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott (Bradf’d
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw,Rt.Hon.T.(Hawick,B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, David Alfred(Merthyr
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Waldron, Laurence Ambrose
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, W. Dudley(Southamptn
Wardle, George J.
Wason,John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Whittaker,SirThomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson,HenryJ.(York,W.R.)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh, N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. M‘Killop and Captain Donelan.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt.Hn.Sir H.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone E.)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T.L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dixon-Hartland,SirFred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan,Robert(Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber,Capt. W. V. (Hants,W.)
Fell, Arthur
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hervey,F.W.F.(BuryS.Edm’ds
Hills, J. W.
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Liddell, Henry
M‘Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Montgomery, H. G.
Moore, William
Nicholson,Wm.G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, Jn. Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, SirBerkeley GeorgeD.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith,F.E.(Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,RtHn J.G.(Oxf’dUniv.
Thomas, W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col.W.H.(Lancashire)

Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Lonsdale and Mr. Charles Craig.

Bill read a second time and committed.

SUNDAY CLOSING.

*Mr. NICHOLLS (Northamptonshire, N.) rose to call attention to the sale of intoxicating liquor on Sunday; and to move, "That, with a view to limit the excessive hours of work on licensed premises, to diminish drinking, to prevent unfair competition with other traders, and to secure a better observance of Sunday, this House records its opinion that licensed premises in England, as in other parts of the British Empire, should be closed on Sundays." He asserted that this was a non-Party question, and that it was supported by men of all shades of political and religious thought. From all parts of the country had come resolutions in support of his Motion, and from all classes—Liberals and Conservatives, labourers and landlords, Nonconformists and Churchmen, parsons and publicans. Few communications had reached him against the Motion. He did not mean to infer that there were no opponents. There were opponents, and they were in earnest. They had a case and they thought a good case. He believed, however, that the supporters of the Resolution had a better case. Reference was made to the excessive hours of work on licensed premises. There were 300,000 barmaids and barmen engaged in the trade. The Sunday sale of liquor entailed seven days labour for both publican and employee. He asked the House to remember the hours licensed premises were open. In London, they were open 123½ hours a week; in the suburbs of large towns 108 hours per week; in other places 102 hours per week. There was no eight hours day for these workers. For six days a week, eight hours a day would be less than fifty hours a week. Hence this was more than a Sabbatarian or a total abstinence question, for surely the barmaids and others connected with the trade desired and deserved and needed Sunday rest and liberty as other workers did. They needed more liberty than others if one looked at the character of their employment. They needed more consideration and protection when it was remembered that they were not organised, and that all attempts at organisation had failed. Many publicans were not now at liberty. Many houses would be closed on Sundays if the publicans were free. But they were told that they must keep their seven days licence or they would lower the market value of the house; that if they once lost a seven days licence they would find it difficult to regain it, and, therefore, they had better keep it. Now, he believed in freedom; he loved to see England free and its people free. But what was freedom? Surely freedom did not consist in a law which gave the few the liberty to claim a preference for their trade over all others. Nor was it the liberty for the few to rob thousands of men and women of their day of rest, simply because they happened to be engaged in a particular trade. He ventured to submit that England could no longer afford to sacrifice the interests of the many to the selfish interests or instincts of the few. He believed that the voice of the people was against this one-trade preference. When the latest canvass was taken among the working classes it was proved that seven voted in favour of Sunday closing to one against. But there were other reasons which might be urged in favour of his proposal. He believed that it would diminish drinking, and that, to his mind, was the greatest of all social problems. In fact he believed it to be one of the cornerstones of the fabric of social reform. In eleven years there had been over 1,000 petitions in favour of Sunday closing; from county councils, town councils, boards of guardians, and education boards; petitions from all quarters, Royal Commissions and Select Committees, mostly in favour of Sunday closing, and, in all cases, in favour of a reduction of hours. They knew that Sunday drinking led to excessive drinking. A man was baited at almost every corner of the streets. According to the Report of the Select Committee in July of 1906—

> "In Scotland the publichouses have been closed for over fifty years with complete success, and the Licensing Act of 1903 has been effectual in dealing with drinking clubs."

He did not in this motion aim at preventing the use of intoxicants, but the sale on Sundays. That, to his mind, was a point that they needed to bear in mind. He was not concerned to make Sunday a religious day even, but a national day of rest. That was most important to the workers. In looking at the speeches made in 1902 when the Sunday Closing Bill was before the House, he noticed that all speakers on both sides of the House, although they would not go the length of complete Sunday closing, yet spoke favourably of a reduction of hours. That was a step in the right direction. They knew how absurd it was to talk of working men needing the licensed house open from 12.30 to 2.30 to fetch the dinner beer. They knew that many of the workers never thought of nor touched Sunday dinner. If it came to shortening the hours, he was for shortening the hours; but he would go much further and would not be afraid of the larger policy. It was not the impossible or unworkable idea of a few faddists, as some people thought, for it had been well tried and welcomed in our Colonies and other parts of the Empire. Why should we be behind? They often heard about the Colonies and America and their system of trade and the danger that they might beat us in the markets. Might he say that they had beaten us? They had beaten us in their method of dealing with the drink problem on Sundays, and wherever adopted he had not yet heard of such Act s being repealed, and any agitation for their repeal was generally on the part of those who were interested in the profits from the sales. Some argued that if they closed the publichouses they would increase rather than diminish the sale of drink. Then surely those who were interested in brewing should help them, for they would sell just as much, and at the same time would give hundreds of thousands of employees their week-end, much freer, and, he thought, cleaner. During the first five years the system was tried in Scotland there was a decrease of nearly 7,000,000 gallons of spirits, and Ireland also had shown a considerable decrease after the introduction of Sunday closing. It was worthy of notice that Sunday closing did not increase the sale. And surely there was need of this reform. The latest available Returns showed that 11,000 persons were convicted annually for Sunday drinking, and the police did not deal with all the cases. If they took the record of Parties they would find that fifty-two years ago a coalition Government gave Sunday closing to Scotland. Thirty-two years ago a Conservative Government gave Sunday closing to Ireland, and twenty-six years ago a Liberal Government gave Sunday closing to Wales, and he hoped, therefore, that this people's Parliament would give it to England. The question was how they would give it. Some advocated that it should be done by local option. He thought that would mean constant friction wherever and whenever it was tried. The changing views of localities and boundary difficulties must always be faced, and he submitted that they could not remove a national evil with a local measure. A national need called for a national movement and a national measure. Who would deny that this was an all-important question? Who could deny the oft-repeated charges that Sunday drinking physically and morally hindered social progress? In many cases it hindered physical fitness on the Monday morning, too. In the case of thousands of men the day intended to make them better fit for life's duties and to leave them more fit than they were on Saturday at mid-day left them less fit. Monday with many large firms was noted for two things—absence from, and lateness at, work. Not only did the firm suffer on that ground, but where it was piecework the mates were also hindered. Let them take the case of miners or navvies or brickmakers, of whom he knew something. Every brickworker would bear testimony to the fact that the mates themselves on Monday were often handicapped because of the absence of others from their gang. Practical testimony was borne by the workers, but the time-keeper's book of many a firm would prove what he had said also. He was asked what could be done with the traveller. His answer to that was that so far as travellers needed to use licensed premises for sleeping or obtaining food and refreshments he had no wish to alter the law. It was the bar and the drinking saloon, in many of which food was never obtained—and they would not thank a person who asked for it, either—which were chiefly aimed at. He had no grudge against those who were engaged in the trade nor was he now concerned with the point of view of the Sabbatarian or the total abstainer. He believed that it would be for the benefit of the whole community, and especially of those engaged in the trade, if the evil of the Sunday sale of liquor were stopped, and that it was the right and duty of the State to interfere. Even if it did not reduce the consumption of liquor or the excessive drinking which was sometimes talked of, such a step would be right and reasonable in principle. He therefore begged leave to move the Resolution of which he had given notice.

*MR. THOMAS RICHARDS (Monmouthshire, W.), in seconding, said it was with great pleasure that he rose to second this important Resolution. He regretted that the extremely limited time at their disposal would permit only of a few remarks from him in its support. There was one fact he wished to impress upon those who would probably oppose the proposal, and it was that this was pre-eminently a working man's question. It was a significant fact that all the representatives of Labour in the House would vote in favour of the Resolution, and he asked those who were going to oppose it to do so honestly and straightforwardly in the interests they had at heart, and not to tell the House that they were doing it in the interests of labour. He knew the working man of Wales better than the working man of England, and therefore he could only speak for English working men in a smaller degree. He had, however, recently had an interesting experience at Bristol. A meeting was held there to ascertain the views of the working men citizens of Bristol upon the proposals of the Government in regard to licensing reform and Sunday closing. On the same platform at that meeting were high dignitaries of the Church of England, Nonconformist ministers, Catholic priests, Salvation Army officers, merchant princes, the Member for Bath, and himself. They were all treated in the same manner, and they were howled at for over two hours. Those who disturbed the meeting had been specially invited to do so by the Members representing the trade, and circulars were sent out by the Licensed Victuallers' Association, urging the men to be at the hall by 6.10, the meeting having been called for 7.30. He was informed that the capacity of the hall was about 4,000. The Resolution was put to the meeting and between 80 and 90 per cent of the 4,000 people voted in favour of it. Whatever might be said of the people in the other big cities and towns of England, it appeared that the citizens of Bristol were in favour of Sunday closing. He had sufficient faith in the English working man to know that removing the temptation to spoil his only day of peace and rest and quiet intercourse with his family was certainly not putting him in bonds but increasing his measure of freedom. He wished to impress on the Government, in connection with their measure of licensing reform, that whatever was done with the general question, and whatever might be the opinion of England on the question, there could be no doubt of the feeling of Monmouthshire—they wished to be included in Welsh Sunday closing. It was said, with very little proof, that Welsh Sunday closing was not a success, but how could it be a complete success when Monmouthshire was not included, and thirsty souls in the mining villages and towns along the river could simply go over to West Monmouth, and spoil not only their own Sundays, but also the Sundays of others who believed that the Sunday should be devoted to the elevation of mankind? He was old-fashioned enough, perhaps from his upbringing as a Welshman, to have implicit faith in the benefits of Christian fellowship and public worship on Sunday; he deplored, more strongly than he could express in the House, any influence that robbed the working man of the proper use of his Sunday. Both from a religious and an economic standpoint he was against all those who advocated indulgence by working men in so-called amusements and selfish pleasures to the neglect of their higher duties and their proper preparation for the coming week. He remembered not long ago a zealous Churchman writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking whether it was consistent with Christian principles for the late Prime Minister to play golf on Sunday. He must confess that while the right hon. Gentleman was making his passionate appeals during the discussion of the Education Bill for the religious education of the children he had often wondered what would have been the right hon. Gentleman's interpretation for little children of the injunction to keep the Sabbath day holy. Possibly the right hon. Gentleman would agree with the reply sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury that a person should spend his Sunday in a manner which would best fit him to perform the duties of the week. For himself he could hardly have thought it possible for a dignitary of any Christian community to send a reply to such a letter without any reference at all to the institution of public worship on that day. He would go somewhat further and say that no man had a right so to spend his Sunday as to rob another man of the rest necessary to fit him for the duty of the coming week, whether at the public-house, or the golf links, or on the bicycle or on the motor-car. He had had one little experience of Sunday closing. He lived in a village situated about 1,300 feet above the sea on the fringe of the Breconshire Beacons, there was a population of about 3,500, and when the Welsh Sunday Act came into operation there were twenty-five public-houses, twenty-four situated in Breconshire and one in Monmouthshire. The operation of the Act closed the twenty-four public-houses, and fortunately the other one was in the hands of a young man who carried it on because it had been left to him, but who was not in sympathy with the trade. Although he could have opened the only public-house for a population of 3,500, he sacrificed a fortune for temperance principles, and closed the house. For a period of seven years, the village enjoyed complete Sunday closing, and it was not too much to say that a large percentage of the working men who formerly used to spend their time in the public-house on Sunday, to the neglect of their wives and children, became reformed men. Then the Local Government Act came into operation, and the village was transferred into Monmouthshire for administrative purposes, and it was transformed from a scene of peace and quietness on Sundays into a scene of drunken debauch, and in many instances wives, and children who should have welcomed the presence of their father on the only day he could be at home, waited in dread his return from the public house. He begged to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, with a view to limit the excessive hours of work on licensed premises, to dimish drinking, to prevent unfair competition with other traders, and to secure a better observance of Sunday, this House records its opinion that licensed premises in England, as in other parts of the British Empire, should be closed on Sundays."—(*Mr. Nicholls.*)

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): This subject has been constantly debated in the House with great eloquence and vigour, but I must confess that having been privileged to listen to these debates over a period of twenty-seven years, I have not yet been convinced that the total closing of public-houses, or licensed premises on Sunday, would be for the benefit of the people at large. There is not one hon. Member on either side of the House who does not wish to see a decrease of drunkenness, and to make our Sundays sober; but, to remove the facilities now offered for the use of licensed premises would be, in my opinion, to impose considerable hardship on the community. The hon. Member for Monmouthshire, West, drew a lurid picture of a meeting he had attended the other day, and I trust that in defending the existing system I will not bring judgment on myself. I know that there are many hon. Gentlemen sitting on my side of the House who do not agree with the views I hold. The mover of this Motion said that this was not a Party question. Licensed houses are already closed in this country for the greater part of the day on Sunday, and I am one of those who think that any further restriction would interfere unduly with the requirements of those who legitimately go to licensed premises on Sunday. Except during certain well-known short hours no one can be served with liquor in a licensed house on Sunday unless he is lodging in that house or is a *bona-fide* traveller. I confess that these facilities are, in my opinion, reasonable facilities. It has not been suggested by any competent authority that so long as the houses remain open on Sunday the hours are unduly long. I would remind the House that the majority Report of the Licensing Commission says that—

> "Complete Sunday closing throughout England would be, in our judgment, a step far in advance of public opinion."

That Report is as true to-day as when it was issued. It is said that Sunday closing is attended with good results in different parts of the Empire. A question of this sort is personal to the inhabitants of each country, whose habits may differentiate their case. A thickly populated country with a considerable proportion of its inhabitants given to outings on Sundays differs from one where the tendency of the people is more stay at home. The hon. Member specially relied upon the instance of Scotland. He says that the effect of the Act which has been many years in operation has been one of great benefit, and that it has reduced drinking; but he did not rely so much upon the argument that it has reduced drunkenness. I am afraid he would find, if he looked at the comparative tables published in the judicial returns, that the proportion of drunkenness is greater in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland than it is in England, where we have no Sunday closing. I may have had an unfortunate experience, but from my personal experience in Scotland I have observed more intemperance on Sunday there than it has been my good fortune to observe in England.—[Laughter.] I admit the slip. I should have said I have been fortunate in finding in England more sobriety on a Sunday than I have in Scottish towns and mining villages with which I am acquainted. There is another argument. If you adopt local Sunday closing I think you will increase the liability to illicit sale of liquor. You would encourage bogus clubs and shebeens, the evils of which are notorious. If you look at the comparative tables you will find that the illicit sale of liquor is larger in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales than it is in England. ["No, no."] If you look at the statistical returns you will find that is so. One other argument I will use. I am afraid that if you have total closing on Sunday you will run a serious danger of increasing that very obnoxious form of drinking—secret drinking. It will compel people to lay in a stock on Saturday, for they will not give up all alcoholic drinks on Sunday. If you do not give them legitimate opportunities of getting beverages from public-houses you will encourage them to lay in spirits, and the presence of such beverages in the house would be a great source of temptation to women and children to indulge in drink. The hon. Gentleman has spoken of canvasses taken. We have been told that a plebiscite was taken in Bristol. But we have not been told what were the views of those who were not canvassed. We cannot conclude that those opposed to Sunday closing will be satisfied with the statements made unless it can be shown that the majority of the people are in favour of it. But the figures in the case of Bristol show a small proportion of the population in favour of the movement. For my part I think total Sunday closing would be an infringement of the liberty of the subject, would lead to the illicit sale of liquor, would increase secret drinking, and be a hardship upon the poorer classes, and for this reason I hope the House will reject the Motion.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland) said the speech to which the House had just listened seemed to urge that in no circumstances was any change in the existing system desirable. The right hon. Gentleman had laid down the doctrine that Sunday closing was an infringement of the liberty of the subject, and ought to be resolutely opposed.

It had not been always that the Conservative Party had held that view. In the Local Government Bill of 1888 it was proposed to give the county councils the power of regulating the closing of public-houses on Sundays, and that was a Bill which bore on its back the names of Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Mathews, and Mr. W. Long. It was inconsistent and illogical to say that Sunday closing was wrong in principle, an infringement of the liberty of the individual, if carried out by statute, but right if carried out by local authorities. The whole argument the right hon. Gentleman had advanced was the old doctrine that it was impossible to make men sober by Act of Parliament. That ancient, hollow, and wholly unfounded principle was, it seemed, shared by the Party opposite. They could not indeed create in men's minds the virtue of sobriety, but they could enforce upon them the habits of sobriety. They not only could, but at this moment they were making men sober by the influence of law. Would the right hon. Gentleman contend that, if Parliament were to abolish the licensing laws, the taxes upon alcohol, the penalties on drunkenness, if it were to allow men to sell liquor as they chose, at the cost of manufacture, without punishment for its misuse, it would not be to the disadvantage of sobriety? Did he doubt for a single moment that a large section of the nation would be plunged into an orgy of drunkenness? They not only could, but at this moment they did make men sober by the Acts of Parliament now in operation. Temperance reform by legislation was not a hopeless thing, and certainly one direction in which it should be attempted was in the direction of the sale of liquor on Sundays. He had obtained within the last few days from the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police some statistics which showed for the months of November, December, and January the arrests for drunkenness on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. Those figures showed that the total number of arrests on Saturdays was 3,966, on Sundays it dropped to 846, and on Mondays it rose again to 2,032. How could those figures be explained? They showed that on Sundays, when the working classes had more leisure than on other days, and when their wages were still hot in their pockets, there was a great decrease in drunkenness, and it was impossible to deny that that must be connected with the restricted hours of opening liquor shops on that day. The right hon. Gentleman said, however, that, in Scotland, Wales and Ireland Sunday closing had had little effect in decreasing drunkenness. That was not so.

Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS: I did not say that. I said the judicial statistics showed that there was more drunkenness on those days than in this country.

*Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL said he very much questioned that. In any case it was exceedingly difficult to compare the figures for arrests in one part of the country with the figures in any other part of the country. Those statistics must be of moderate value, because everything depended upon the degree of stringency with which the law was administered by the police. But every Committee or Commission which had inquired into the question—and they must attach some weight to careful inquiries like those—had said, without exception, that large improvements had been secured in the direction of sobriety in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, by Sunday closing. A Government such as the present, formed with the prime and essential purpose of promoting measures of social reform, must view with sympathy the main principle that underlay the Motion of his hon. friend. It had many powerful forces behind it. It had the religious forces of the community desiring to obtain a better observance of Sunday; it had the great body of temperance workers throughout the nation, to whose efforts

England owed so much, and who asked for Sunday closing as a means of securing less alcoholic excess; and it had the support of the forces of organised labour. Organised labour supported such a Motion because it was realised that this was not only a religious matter but essentially a labour question as well, and this element was a factor of the highest importance. He did not know whether the House quite realised how excessive were the hours of the men and women engaged in public houses. There was no trade in the whole country—not even that of shop assistants, nor of omnibus men and car-drivers and conductors—who were more grossly overworked than the bar-maids and barmen who served in public-houses. He looked yesterday at the evidence before the Labour Commission of some years ago to discover what the hours really were. He found a most remarkable and striking piece of evidence from the chairman of the Licensed Victuallers' Central Protection Board of London, who came before that Commission to rebut the gross exaggeration of those who said the hours of labour in public-houses were excessively long. That gentleman said that allowing for meal times, and allowing for periods of rest during the day, the actual working hours of men and women in well-managed public-houses were no more than twelve hours and ten minutes a day on week-days, with an addition of eight hours on Sunday—a total of eighty-one hours per week; and from that figure, he said, with considerable pride, they must deduct the holiday of one week-day every four weeks which the barmen and barmaids are allowed to take. Mr. Charles Booth's investigations confirmed those figures and showed that barmen and barmaids worked over eighty, and sometimes up to ninety hours per week. No wonder in those circumstances that the death-rate in the trade was the highest of any occupation. The House might imagine how much bodily vigour and mental energy were left to men and women subjected to such excessive overwork. This question of Sunday closing was no simple problem. There were a great variety of proposals as to the best methods of dealing with it. The majority of the Royal Commission on the Liquor Laws recommended a slight reduction in the hours of opening. A minority of that Commission, including Lord Peel, recommended that the hours should be reduced to one hour at mid-day and two hours in the evening as a maximum, and that the licensing authority should have power to reduce or to close entirely. Travellers, in the discretion of the licensing authority, should be allowed to be served, but in any case only in hotels and restaurants, and after a journey of seven miles. Five Members who had signed the Minority Report went further and recommended total closing. Others have proposed a measure of local option, others that houses might be closed against consumption on the premises, but allowed to be open for a limited sale of liquor for consumption off them, whilst others were desirous of leaving the matter entirely to the discretion of the licensing authority. The Government believed that some elasticity was necessary. He did not know that the ordinary English workman sitting at his Sunday dinner, perhaps the chief culinary event of the week, surrounded by his family, with his glass of ale at his side, was so wholly degraded a figure that they should attack him with all the terrors of the law. Then, again, there were those who on Sunday enjoyed excursions by bicycle, or motor car, or on foot. It was well known that the *bona fide* traveller was often no more than a *bona fide* toper, but *bona fides* might be found even in Sunday travellers. He could not anticipate the details of the Government Bill, but he could say that no Licensing Bill could be complete which omitted to deal with the question of Sunday trading. If the Resolution should go to a division he would have no hesitation in voting for it, because the Government agreed with the main principle which underlay it, without at the same time committing themselves to a complete, universal and unqualified plan. He believed there was in the House a general desire that the Governments Licensing Bill should follow two main principles—it should be effective for its purpose, and it should not be violent in its methods. There would be a desire that they should proceed fully as far as an enlightened public opinion allowed without ignoring or treating as negligible the limits which that public opinion imposed.

*MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.) said he had attended the House prepared with a large number of statistics and arguments against the Resolution, but he was happy to say the speech to which the House had just listened furnished him with a sufficient text for the rest of his life to oppose the Motion. The hon. Gentleman had told the House that the cases of drunkenness on Saturdays numbered 4,000, on Sundays 800, and on Mondays 2,000. No better argument was wanted to show that working people did not avail themselves of the opportunity of drinking excessively. Why did not the hon. Gentleman in his forthcoming legislation have the courage to say that the public-houses should be closed on Saturday afternoons? He protested against this reversion to the old sumptuary laws and to the establishment of coercion of the working classes. He was sorry to stand between the House and a division, but even Mr. Speaker would agree that the question had not been fully discussed in the time the House had had at its disposal.

And, it being Eleven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [1st March], "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.:"—

Question again proposed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.,"—(*Mr. Walter Rea*)—put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY (NAVY ESTIMATES).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, including 18,595 Royal Marines," resumed:—

Question again proposed.

And it being after Eleven of the clock, and objection being taken to further Proceeding, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

Adjourned at four minutes after
Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 6*th March*, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill; Boston Spa Gas Bill; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill; Simon-Carves Bye-Product Coke Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited—(Petition for Bill). Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday next.

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.]. Amendment reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.]. Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NAVAL WORKS.

Statement showing the total estimated cost of each work as shown in the Naval Works Act, 1905, and as subsequently revised, the estimated expenditure thereon during 1907–1908, and 1908–1909, and the expected date of completion.

Memorandum showing progress and expenditure, etc., on items included in the Naval Works Act.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Report made in pursuance of 16th and 17th Vict., chap. 137, s. 60, in the matter of the charity known as the Hulme Trust Estates.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Committee have nominated the following Lords to serve as Chairmen of the Standing Committee:

E. Crewe (*L. President*).
E. Onslow.
E. Camperdown.
V. Cross
V. St. Aldwyn.
L. Balfour.
L. Burghclere.

Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

STANDING COMMITTEE.

Report from the Committee of Chairmen of the Standing Committee, That they have appointed the Viscount Cross Chairman of the Standing Committee; read and ordered to lie on the Table.

SMALL HOLDINGS.

The Earl of ONSLOW: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government whether they will introduce in this House the measure for amending the law affecting small holdings in England and Wales, promised in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. I have put this question on the Paper, because my noble friend behind me, the Leader of the Opposition, observed, on the first evening that Parliament met, that the measures of social reform had been placed at the tail of the procession of Bills which were promised in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. The noble Marquess the Leader of the House, the cause of whose absence we all deeply deplore, said he considered that these measures of social reform were of the gravest importance; and, alluding to the one affecting small holdings, the noble Marquess stated that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce a real, honest, and substantial Bill. He added that it had been said in some quarters that if a Bill of that sort were presented to Parliament the House of Lords would throw it out. I was very glad, however, that he went on to say that he did not for one moment believe that that would be the case.

Now, I venture to think that in this House there are a very large number of noble Lords who have a special knowledge of this subject, and who are very largely in sympathy with the desire to create more small holdings. Theirs is not only a theoretical desire; they have exhibited it in a practical manner by doing their best to create small holdings on their own estates. For several reasons, therefore, I venture to express the hope that His Majesty's Government will see their way to introduce in this House the measure which they have promised for amending the law on this subject. There have been many expressions, on the part of noble Lords opposite, of their earnest desire to give your Lordships an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion on measures submitted to Parliament with plenty of time to consider them. Again, in this House we have the advantage of the presence of the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture, under whose auspices I imagine this Bill will be introduced to Parliament.

There were a number of measures brought in by His Majesty's Government last year, such as the Agricultural Holdings Bill, the Trade Disputes Bill, and the Irish Labourers Bill, which your Lordships agreed to pass into law; and I am sure we are anxious, if we can, to pass other measures introduced by His Majesty's Government. There is yet another reason why I would urge that this Bill should be introduced in your Lordships' House. The Government are generally understood to have intimated that they do not see their way at present to introduce into the other House of Parliament and get a Second Reading for a great many of the measures which were promised in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. When the Easter holiday arrives hon. Members will go down to their constituencies, and I would venture to suggest to noble Lords opposite that they would give some little pabulum to those gentlemen if, before the Easter adjournment, they introduced into this House, as they are unable to do so in the other, one or two of the measures referred to, so as to show what is the legislative programme of His Majesty's Government. I beg to ask the Question standing in my name in the hope that I shall receive an affirmative reply.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, before I reply to the Question put to the Government by the noble Earl, I hope he will allow me to thank him, on behalf of those who sit on this side of the House, for his allusion to the absence of my noble friend Lord Ripon, who would naturally have answered this question had he been here, and to the melancholy cause of that absence. I well know in what warm personal regard my noble friend is held in this House without distinction of Party, and what pride we all feel in the long years of service which he has given to the State. Now he has been called upon to suffer the heaviest blow which can fall upon any man by the loss of the gracious lady who, for a period of nearer sixty than fifty years, was partner of his home. I feel sure that it is not too much to say that the affection and sympathy of the whole House go out to my noble friend in his great bereavement.

Now, my Lords, I come to the question put by the noble Earl. I find myself in very considerable agreement with what he said as to the great interest that is taken by so many of your Lordships in the question of small holdings. It is perfectly true that a very large number of Members of this House—indeed, by far the greater number—have shown the most practical form of interest in the question by doing what they can to promote and increase small holdings upon their estates; and from that point of view there would no doubt be much to be said for introducing the measure in your Lordships' House. On the other hand, it has to be remembered that measures of a similar character have in former years been introduced in the other House. That, I think, is due to a fact which I believe will also apply to a considerable extent to this measure. Questions of finance play a considerable part in all measures of this kind. In these circumstances, although I am not in a position to say anything to the noble Earl or the House about the introduction of this Bill, I am afraid he must take it from me that when it is brought in it will be introduced in another place and not here.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I am sure that noble Lords on this side of the House will allow me to say how entirely we associate ourselves with the words to which the noble Earl opposite has just given utterance as to the great bereavement which the Leader of the House has lately experienced. We regard the noble Marquess not only with the respect to which his position in this House and his long official career entitle him, but also with a feeling which my noble friend described, it seemed to me, most appropriately—a feeling of personal regard which it is not too much to call affectionate. When we heard of the great calamity which had befallen the noble Marquess there was not one of us who did not feel that in a humble way he shared that great sorrow. These private griefs are too sacred to be publicly discussed, and I therefore will not say more upon the subject except to offer to the noble Marquess our sympathy, which is not less heartfelt than the sympathy of his friends and colleagues opposite.

Now, my Lords, passing to the Answer which has just been given to the Question put to the Government by my noble friend Lord Onslow, I cannot help saying that I listened with considerable disappointment to the reply of the noble Earl. I really can conceive no reason why a Bill dealing with the question of small holdings should not be introduced in this House. There is amongst Members of this House a great amount of what I think I have a right to describe as expert knowledge of the subject; and nothing could be further from the truth than to suggest that amongst noble Lords who sit on these benches there is anything like reluctance in regard to the policy for which, I presume, expression will be found in this Bill. Most of us, on the contrary, have again and again supported that policy in argument, and many of us have tried to give practical effect to it by our own conduct in the management of our estates. Surely, considering the fact that this House during the earlier part of the session is but scantily occupied, it would have been fair to us to have given us a full opportunity of considering and reviewing and making suggestions with regard to any measure dealing with a subject of this kind. I really cannot help, even now, entertaining a hope that His Majesty's Government will, on reconsideration, say that this Bill is one which your Lordships might be entrusted in the first instance to consider and to deal with.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 6th March, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour—from Grange, Harrington, Kilburn, and Mitchell's Main Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Old Monkland, against; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petition from Ilfracombe, against; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Petition from Ringstead, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour—From Brentwood, Bromley, Ladybank, and Tynemouth; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Report of the Board of Education in the matter of the Charity known as the Hulme Trust Estates (Educational) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERY (REPORT).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 5th March; *Mr. Runciman*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 68.]

STANDING COMMITTEES.

Ordered, That all Standing Committees have leave to print and circulate with the Votes the Minutes of their Proceedings and any amended Clauses of Bills committed to them.—(*Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

POST OFFICE (LIVERPOOL AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).

Copy ordered, "of the Contract, dated the 2nd day of February 1907, with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the conveyance of the Mails, Troops, and Stores between Liverpool and Hong Kong, for the period from the 7th day of April 1906 to the 6th day of April 1908, together with a Copy of the Treasury Minute thereon, dated the 27th day of February 1907."—(*Mr. Runciman.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 69.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Naval Works Acts 1895–1905.

MR. RUSSELL REA (Gloucester): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will state separately, regarding the Naval Works Acts from 1895 to the present date, the gross capital liabilities, the amount of the unexpended balances, the amount of the annuity included in the Navy Estimates for each loan, and the date upon which it is anticipated each loan will be automatically extinguished; whether it is intended to exhaust the borrowing powers under these Acts; and, if not, to what extent it is estimated the contingent liabilities under these Acts will be reduced.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson*) The annuities created in respect of money borrowed under the authority of the Naval Works Acts, 1895 to 1905, are as follows:—

Amount borrowed.			Period in which borrowed.	Amount of Annuity created		Date of termination of Annuity.
£	s.	d.		£	s.	
375,000	0	0	1895–96 - - - -	18,313	0	Redeemed in the year 1896–7 from the Budget surplus of 1895–6.
2,046,617	10	2	1st Jan. to 31st Dec. 1900	122,255	6	1st December 1924
2,868,000	0	0	” ” 1901	175,640	1	1st November 1924
3,218,000	0	0	” ” 1902	204,114	19	” ”
1,186,000	0	0	1st Jan. to 30th Sept. 1903	78,363	13	” ”
1,031,000	0	0	1st Oct. to 31st Dec. 1903	53,864	3	8th December 1932
2,538,500	0	0	1st Jan. to 31st Dec. 1904	134,043	3	8th December 1933
2,140,000	0	0	1st Jan. to 31st Dec. 1905	112,278	9	8th December 1934
2,275,000	0	0	1st Jan. to 31st Dec. 1906	120,093	0	8th December 1935
3,325,854	18	6	14th October 1904 - -	(a)		This sum was borrowed on Exchequer Bonds of the nominal value of £3,375,000 under the authority of The Capital Expenditure (Money) Act, 1904. The bonds mature for payment on the 14th October 1909.

(*a*) This loan necessitates the provision of the under-mentioned sums in the Navy Estimates for the years 1905–6 to 1909–10. The provision to be made in the years 1910–11, etc., will depend upon the extent to which the original bonds may be finally paid off in 1909, and also upon the terms on which money may be raised in that year for renewing or replacing the bonds not so redeemed:—

		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1905–6	Interest* - - - - - - -	126,562	10	0			
	Expenses of issue - - - - - -	8,467	15	4			
	Principal - - - - - - - -	112,500	0	0	247,530	5	4
In each of years 1906–7 to 1909–10	Interest - - - -	101,250	0	0			
	Principal - - -	112,500	0	0	213,750	0	0

* Includes five quarterly dividends instead of four, as in subsequent years.

As regards the last part of the Question I must refer my hon. friend to the First Lord's statement explanatory of the Navy Estimates 1907–8 [Cd. 3336].

Grants in Aid of Secondary Education.

Mr. GODDARD (Ipswich): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether, in view of the communication, dated 16th February, 1906, made by the late President of the Board to the Right Hon. A. Dyke Acland promising an increase of the grants for secondary education, and in view of the fact that most local education authorities are now preparing their estimates for the ensuing financial year, he can give any information as to the amount of these increased grants, and the dates from which the payment of them will commence.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The total amount of grants in aid of secondary education will be found in the Estimates published to-day. The allocation of these grants and the dates from which payment will commence will be subject to regulations which are now under consideration, but I am not yet in a position to make any statement upon the subject.

Welsh Education Department — Mr. Davies's Knowledge of the Welsh Language.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the President of the Board of Education if Mr. Alfred Davies, the head of the new Welsh Department, has a knowledge of the Welsh language; and whether, in view of the desirability of such a qualification in the chief of a Department formed for the purpose of superivsing the education of schools in which Welsh is largely spoken and taught, and in some cases made a compulsory subject, in filling any future appointments in the Department, he will consider the advisability of giving *cæteris paribus* preference to Welsh-speaking applicants.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I am informed that Mr. Davies has a useful acquaintance with the Welsh language, but my hon. friend appears to have overlooked the fact that he will be employed exclusively in administrative duties in London.

The Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state whether an inspection has been made, and, if so, when, of the Letterkenny and Burtonport extension railway line, county Donegal; whether complaints have been made by the working company as to defective construction and insufficient equipment; whether he is aware that many passengers travelling by the line are in a state of trepidation until they get off it; and will he say when he will cause an inspection and report to be made that will allay those fears or cause the defects to be made good.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The railway referred to was inspected on behalf of the Board of Trade in February 1903 before it was opened for passenger traffic. The Board of Trade are aware that complaints have been made by the working company respecting alleged defects in the construction and equipment of the line by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, but we have no knowledge of any special risk to passengers on this railway. The Board have no power to inquire into the condition of the line except upon representations made to them by the county council or by twenty or more ratepayers of the guaranteeing area, as provided by section 24 of the authorising Order in Council of 1898. No application under this section is at present before the Department.

Increase in Exports of British Manufactures.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been, in round figures, the increase in the export of British produce and manufactures during the past ten years; and how much of that increase is due to increased exports to the self-governing Colonies.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The following statement shows the exports of United Kingdom produce for each of the last ten years, distinguishing exports to the self-governing Colonies :—

United Kingdom. Exports of British and Irish Produce.

Years.	To all Destinations.	To Self-Governing Colonies.
	Million Pounds.	Million Pounds.
1897 -	234·2	40·1
1898 -	233·4	39·5
1899 -	255·3	41·0
1900 -	282·6	47·5
1901 -	270·9	52·0
1902 -	277·6	59·3
1903 -	286·5	58·5
1904 -	296·2	51·6
1905 -	324·4	51·4
1906 -	367·0	56·6

Note.—The above figures are exclusive of the value of ships and boats (new) and their machinery, which were not recorded prior to 1899.

United States and Free Zones.

MR. HAROLD COX: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received any official information with regard to the suggestion made by the Secretary of the United States Treasury that in order to facilitate the manufacture in the United States of goods for export, a zone should be established in which all materials necessary for manufacturing purposes would be admitted free of duty; and whether he will cause any such information to be published in order that the people of this country may further appreciate the importance of preserving these islands as a free zone for the pursuance of manufacturing industries.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) Yes, Sir, my attention has been directed to a report of a speech in which the suggestion referred to is contained. A note of this appears at page 400 of the Board of Trade Journal for 21st February.

The North Western Railway and the London Municipal Society.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that the directors of the London and North Western Railway assisted in financing the London Municipal Society, a party organisation for promoting the success of Municipal Reform candidates at the London County Council election; whether he will make an inquiry into the extent and circumstances of the subscription, and, whether, in view of the fact that a railway company is created by Act of Parliament, he will take any steps to enable the shareholders to recover the sums which have been so spent by the directors.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The Board of Trade are informed by the Company that in July 1906 they subscribed £200 out of their corporate funds to the funds of the London Municipal Society, the objects of which were represented to them to be absolutely non-political in character. It is open to the shareholders to challenge in the courts the question of the legality of any such application of the corporate funds of a company.

Labourers Act 1906—Use of Form 6.

MR. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): To ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, if he will say on what provision of the Labourers Act of 1906 the Local Government Board rely in holding that labourers shall not benefit under Section 8 of that Act, that councils whose districts contain uneconomic holdings, congestion, and a tract of untenanted land, may not use Form No. 6 for the acquisition of that tract, though well within the council's borrowing power, and in thus depriving Form No. 6 of any practical use; and will he endeavour to have the Act interpreted by the Board and its inspectors more liberally with at least equal correctness.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) Section 8 of The Labourers Act, 1906, to which the hon. Member refers, confers no power whatever to acquire lands. It merely enables a rural district council to let lands which they have already acquired for the purposes of the Acts to be used for some other beneficial purpose in cases in which it is found that such lands cannot be used any longer for providing labourers with cottages and plots in accordance with the Acts. The section does not, however, enable a scheme to be promoted under the Labourers Acts for the purpose of attaining objects, however desirable in themselves, which are beyond the actual requirements of the Acts. The Local Government Board inform me that they have never expressed the opinion that Form No. 6 may not be used for the acquisition of untenanted lands when such acquisition is necessary for the purposes of the Acts.

Irish Stone for Haulbowline Extensions.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): To ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether steps will be taken with a view to secure that Irish stone shall be used in all work connected with the lengthening of the dry dock at Haulbowline where stone is required.

(*Answered by Mr. Lambert.*) The policy of the Admiralty is to specify a standard of requirements without limitation of the sources of supply. I think, however, my hon. and gallant friend may rest assured that a considerable quantity of local stone will be used.

Licence of George Inn, Hubberholme, and the Living of Hubberholme.

Mr. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): To ask the right hon. Member for Sheffield (Hallam Division), as representing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whether his attention has been drawn to the objection of the Skipton bench of magistrates to the licence of the George Inn, Hubberholme, near Buckden, on the ground of structural deficiency, and that the incumbent of Hubberholme informed the bench that the house formed part of the glebe of the benefice, and that the value of the living was under £200 a year, and to take away the licence would mean a considerable reduction in the incumbent's stipend; and whether he will advise the patron of the living, the vicar or Arncliffe, Queen Anne's Bounty, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to relinquish this licence, and to reimburse the incumbent for the monetary loss sustained thereby.

(*Answered by Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*) From such information as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners possess in relation to the property of this benefice, which it must be remembered is neither vested in nor managed by the Commissioners, it appears that a house on the glebe, probably that to which the hon. Member's Question relates, has been used as an inn for upwards of seventy years, but the Commissioners know nothing concerning the acquisition of the licence. The funds of the Commissioners are not available for compensating the incumbent for a voluntary surrender of the licence.

Marine Biological Association—Application for Treasury Grant.

Mr. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received an application from the Marine Biological Association for a grant for the continuation of the international investigation as to the migration and spawning of fish, and as to the best means of preserving the fishing grounds in the North Sea; if so, whether the amount asked for is £8,000; and whether, in view of the decision of the International Commission to continue its work for another five years, and of the importance of scientific fishery investigations to the fishing industry of this country, he can see his way to grant the application.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The Answer to the first two Questions is in the affirmative. I find that there is great difference of opinion in well-informed circles as to the advantage which the fishing industry is likely to derive from continued participation by this country in the international investigations. In these circumstances, it has been decided to appoint a Committee to consider and advise the Government upon the various questions involved. The composition of the Committee and its terms of reference will be announced at an early date. In the meantime the existing grants are being continued for one year on the present basis.

Low Value of Irish Land Stock.

Mr. MOND (Chester): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been directed to the low value of Irish Land Stock in comparison with Consols, and to the large loss incurred in the first issue of Irish Land Stock; whether this stock is guaranteed, not only by a charge on the land, but also by a charge on the Consolidated Fund; and, if so, whether he will take steps to make this additional security more generally known to the investing public.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I am aware of the low price of guaranteed 2¾ per cent. Stock relatively to that of Consols. I do not think the lowness of the price can fairly be attributed to ignorance of the fact that the Stock is guaranteed by the Consolidated Fund. A statement to that effect has been included in the prospectus of each issue of the loan, besides being implied in the title of the Stock.

Mr. MOND: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, in view of the reduced amounts realised by the Treasury owing to the low issue price of Irish Land Stock and the consequent reduction of the sums available for the purchase of land under this Act, he will take steps to introduce legislation to enable the funds for this purpose to be raised by the Treasury by means of the issue of Consols or other means.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) My right hon. friend is alive to the difficulties to which my hon. friend refers, but he is not satisfied that, under existing conditions, they can be avoided, and he is not prepared to introduce legislation of the kind suggested.

Fall in Trade with Persia by the Quetta-Nushki Route.

Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India, what explanation exists for the fall in 1906 of the trade with Persia by the Quetta-Nushki route.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) An outbreak of plague in Seistan in the early months of 1906 is sufficient to account for any diminution of trade. The Report for the year with complete figures has not yet reached me.

Representation of the Planting Industry on the Legislative Council.

Mr. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is the intention of the Government of India, in view of the importance of the planting industry in Eastern Bengal and Assam, to provide for its permanent representation on the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant Governor, instead of giving it a representation alternating with that of another industry.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I answered a similar Question asked by the hon. Member on the 5th July last,† and I have nothing to add. As I said then, I have no doubt that the planting interest will receive the fullest representation that is consistent with a due regard for other claims.

Chinese Government and the Importation and Taxation of Indian Opium.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether any proposals have recently been received from the Chinese Government in regard to the importation and taxation of Indian opium; and, if so, will be lay them upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. It would not be in the public interest to lay Papers at present.

Saving Effected on Expiry of New System of Service and Proficiency Pay.

Mr. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the antpiciated saving to be ultimately effected by the new system of service and proficiency pay when those soldiers now serving have passed out of the Army.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) One of the principal features of proficiency pay is that it depends in every case upon the attainment of certain standards of skill in musketry or other military qualifications. Until experience has been gained of the effect of this upon the average standard reached by the soldier it is not practicable to give any reliable estimate of the financial effect of these changes.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clx., 222.

Condition of Joiners' Work in Woolwich Arsenal.

Mr. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the conditions under which the joiners' work in the Woolwich Arsenal is done are such as to make it impossible for a joiner, who is a trade unionist, to accept employment there; and whether he intends taking any steps to alter the present conditions so that trade unionist joiners may have the same opportunity of working in the Arsenal as the non-unionist.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am not aware that the conditions under which the joiners' work is done in the Arsenal are of the nature which would make it impossible for a joiner who is a trade unionist to accept employment there, nor do I see any reason for making alterations in the present conditions.

Future Employment of Irish Militia.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the Government's intentions respecting the future employment of Irish Militia officers, the disposal of Irish Militia battalions of artillery, and the disposal of the North of Ireland and South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, under the proposed scheme of army organisation.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am not in a position at the present moment to give any detailed information on these points beyond what I have already given to the House in my recent statements.

Volunteer Regulations.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, having regard to the fact that this is the recruiting season for the Volunteer Force, he can say definitely whether the recruits now anxious to enrol will do so under the conditions of The Volunteer Act, 1863, varied by such civil contracts as they may enter into in respect to the gratuitous supply of uniform and equipment, or under the new conditions now proposed by the Government of four years enlistment in a territorial army, three months notice, fine on leaving before the expiration of four years, compulsory annual camps, and six months' compulsory training whenever the First Class Army Reserve may be mobilised.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) All recruiting for the Volunteer Force will for the present be under the existing statutes and regulations.

Evictions on the Clanricarde Estates.

Mr. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland will he state the number of tenants evicted on the Irish estates of Lord Clanricarde in the seven years ending 1st January 1892, and in the fifteen years ending 1st January 1907, and state how many of those evicted in each period were evicted for non-payment of rent and how many on expiration or determination of their tenancies; how many of those so evicted for non-payment of rent subsequently redeemed or were restored to their holdings and how many are still out of possession; have the Estates Commissioners decided how many of those out of possession are suitable persons to be restored or to have new holdings provided for them; have they provided new holdings for any of the Clanricarde evicted tenants on the many Galway estates acquired by the Estates Commissioners; if not, will he press upon them the urgent need of so doing; and can he state approximately the present number of tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are unable to state accurately the number of evicted tenants on the Clanricarde estate, but 142 persons have applied for reinstatement in holdings on that estate. One hundred and seven of the applicants state that they were evicted during the seven years ending

1st January 1892. These 107 cases are made up as follows—

Number of applicants who, it is stated, were evicted for non-payment of rent - - -	67
Number who, it appears, were evicted from sub-tenancies on the eviction of the immediate tenant -	3
Number of applications with an inspector (on this account the cause of an eviction cannot be stated) - - - - - -	29
Number evicted during the seven years mentioned who were provided with holdings on other estates in county Galway by the Commissioners - - - - -	8
	107

Twenty-nine of the applicants state they were evicted during the fifteen years ending 1st January 1907, and this number is made up as follows—

Number who, it is stated, were evicted for non-payment of rent	16
Cases in which application was made by a herd who was dismissed (no claim as an evicted tenant) - -	1
Number of applications with an inspector (cause of eviction cannot, therefore, be given) - -	11
Number evicted during the fifteen years who were given holdings on other estates in county Galway by the Commissioners -	1
	29

Six applications remain, and they are accounted for—

Evicted before the periods mentioned (one of these applications is outside the Act) - - - -	4
Applications in which no date of eviction is given - - -	2
Total - - -	142

If any tenants were evicted and subsequently redeemed, or were restored to their farms, presumably they have not lodged applications for reinstatement. So far as the Estates Commissioners are aware, 133 applicants are out of possession, but one of these applications is outside the Act (shown above). Inquiries have not yet been completed as to the number suitable to be restored or to have new holdings provided for them. There are approximately 891 agricultural and 472 town tenants on the Clanricarde estate. The Estates Commissioners already know the earnest wish of the Irish Government to have these and other cases of evicted tenants investigated and, so far as may be, disposed of at the earliest possible date.

Tobacco Growing in Ireland.

Mr. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Department of Agriculture in any way provides money which is given as a subvention or assistance for tobacco growing in Ireland; and what are the names of the persons in receipt of such assistance and the amounts granted in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Department have erected three barns at Randalstown, county Meath, Tagoat, county Wexford, and Tullamore, King's County, at a cost of £1,727, £1,823, and £1,374, respectively. Colonel Everard, of Randalstown, Navan, has the use of the Randalstown barn; Messrs. Richardson, of Mullacrew, Tullamore, of the Tullamore barn; while about a dozen farmers at Tagoat share the barn at that centre. The Department supply the services of an expert to these centres and, so far as possible, to others growing tobacco. They have also paid the wages (30s. per week) of an instructor for the Wexford tobacco growers. Beyond this the Department give no financial assistance, but growers receive a rebate of 1s. per lb. from the Government.

Jamaica Earthquake—School Accommodation.

Mr. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that school buildings and teachers' dwellings were destroyed by the recent earthquake in Jamaica; that in very many cases children and teachers have been rendered houseless; that it has not been practicable in several cases to re-open the schools, even in tents or shanties; that nevertheless the education department of the island has issued a circular to the effect that the pay of any teacher who does not open school at once will be stopped, and notices of school inspection are being served on some teachers in the city of Kingston; will he say what steps, if any, are being taken by the Government to provide for the housing and carrying on of the schools; and whether he can give instructions that during the exceptional conditions which now prevail the education department of the island shall show due consideration and make due allowances in these matters.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) In answer to the hon. Member's Question, the Secretary of State has no information but will make inquiry.

Valuation and Taxation of Land in Canada.

MR. TREVELYAN: To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will ask the Canadian Government for information, similar to that obtained from Australia and New Zealand and published in Cd. 3191 of 1906, with regard to the separate valuation and taxation of land in Vancouver and any other part of the dominion where such legislation is in force.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Yes, Sir.

Assistant Clerks in the Customs Statistical Department.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury how many of the new class of assistant clerks are employed in the Statistical Department of the Customs; how many have sufficient service to render them eligible for promotion; and how many of the new class of assistant clerks in the statistical office have received promotion to port clerkships.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that there are 127 of the new class of assistant clerks employed in the Statistical Department of the Customs; sixty of these clerks have sufficient service to render them eligible for promotion under the provisions of the Orders in Council of November 1898 and September 1902; and none of the class employed in the Statistical Department have received promotion to port clerkships.

Promotion in the Irish Board of Works Dublin.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, if he will ask the Board of Works, Dublin, to explain why, when three staff officers' salaries were raised from £400 to £450, a staff officer, who is now registrar and has longer service, was ignored; and is he responsible for having this gentleman's case passed over.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The increase of pay of the three staff officers referred to was decided upon by the Treasury after conference with the Board of Works. No increase was made in the salary of the fourth staff officer, because the work of the registry is less responsible and less difficult than that of the other divisions.

Overtime Pay for Postman Waite, of Knock.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Postmaster General, whether he will reconsider his refusal to pay overtime money to a postman named Waite, at Knock, seeing that for two years the man performed the overtime and during that period made repeated applications for payment, which was refused, though the work was admittedly performed and the man's daily work reduced in consequence; and will he state the nature of the regulation which precludes payment for work admittedly performed.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) It is not the practice to pay postmen for overtime on outdoor work which is not performed under immediate supervision and which cannot therefore be checked. It is true that for some time Waite's duty occupied him rather more than eight hours. This has, however, been put right, and the duty is now considerably less than eight hours.

Fatal Railway Accidents.

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many railway collisions or other kinds of accidents have occurred, in which one or more passengers were killed, from 1st January 1886 to 31st December 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) During the twenty-one years in question eighty-six train accidents, resulting in fatal injuries to one or more passengers, occurred on the railways of the United Kingdom.

The Housing Bill.

Mr. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is in a position to give any indication of the date of introduction of the Housing Bill promised in the King's Speech.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) Perhaps I may answer this Question. I am not at present in a position to state when the Bill referred to will be introduced.

Standardising of Accounts of Local Authorities.

Mr. BRODIE: To ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he can fix any date for the issue of the Report on standardising the accounts of local authorities.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I understand that the Committee are now considering their complete Report; but I am not at present able to fix the date for its issue.

Repayment of Loans for Volunteer Drill Halls.

Mr. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if the sum of £439,000, to be voted for paying off loans to Volunteer corps for drill halls and ranges, covers the total indebtedness of those corps to the Public Works Loans Commissioners for the purposes mentioned.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The reply is in the affirmative so far as affects fully paid loans by the Public Works Loan Commissioners to the corps which have borrowed of them. This point is set forth clearly in the explanation attached to the Supplementary Estimate.

Position of Officers of Disbanded Regiments.

Lieutenant-Colonel PHILIPPS (Southampton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in the case of line battalions recently disbanded or reduced, or about to be disbanded or reduced, the officers belonging to these battalions, when transferred to other regiments for the convenience of the public service, will take their places in their new regiment at the bottom of the list of their rank or according to the dates of their present commissions.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Officers of recently disbanded battalions are, on transfer, placed as juniors of their rank in the new regiment, in accordance with the provisions of the King's Regulations. I would refer the hon. and gallant Member to a reply which I gave on the 18th February to my hon. friend the Member for East Islington to a somewhat similar Question.†

Liability of the Yeomanry for Foreign Service.

Mr. BRODIE: To ask the Secretary of State for War if it is intended that all Yeomanry should in future be engaged for foreign service, if necessary, or whether only a certain number of Yeomanry are to be so engaged; and, in the latter case, whether arrangements will be made so that certain Yeomanry regiments may be engaged as units for foreign service, in view of the probable objection on the part of officers and men to the division of their individual regiments into different classes, and of the probable want of homogeneity in the case of bodies formed of troops or squadrons from different regiments.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is not intended that the Yeomanry of the territorial force shall be enlisted with a liability for service abroad. The organisation of the special squadrons voluntarily undertaking such liability has not yet been finally settled.

Strength of Horse and Field Artillery.

Captain CRAIG: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will lay upon the Table a Return showing the strength of the Horse and Field Artillery by batteries, officers, men, and horses on 1st April 1895 and 1st April 1905; whether he will also show the proposed establishment, giving batteries, officers, men, and horses under the Secretary of State's scheme; and what saving in money it is estimated will be effected by the change.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 535-6.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The proposed scheme of reorganisation of the Horse and Field Artillery is not worked out in sufficient detail to enable me to give the information required by the last part of the Question, but I can give the hon. and gallant Member the information asked for in the first part of the Question should he still so desire.

The Government's Small Holdings Bill.

MR. BRODIE: To ask the Prime Minister whether he is able to fix a day for the introduction of the Small Holdings Bill promised in the King's Speech, at the opening of Parliament; and whether, in the event of his being unable to fix a day, he can give an undertaking that the Bill will be introduced and printed before the Easter Recess, in order that the House may have an opportunity of studying its provisions before Parliament reassembles.

(*Answered by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*) I have nothing at present to add to the Answer which I gave on the 27th of February to the Question of my hon. friend the Member for the Rugby Division.†

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

New Zealand Tariffs.

MR. HILLS (Durham): On behalf of the hon. Member for Darlington, I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table of the House details of the British tariff preference which is now in force in New Zealand.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I would refer the hon. Member to Cd. 3195, especially pages VIII.–X. of the Introductory Notes as to the preference granted by New Zealand to the United Kingdom. He may also desire to know that the rebates of duties granted by New Zealand to South Africa under a preferential tariff arrangement recently concluded are printed on page 183 of the Board of Trade Journal for 24th January, 1907.

Bonded Warehouses at Famagusta.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a private corporation is endeavouring to obtain a monopoly of the bonded warehouses at Famagusta, whereby, if such endeavours prove successful, Indian merchants will be at the mercy of such corporation in trading with Turkey; and, if so, whether he will take such steps as may be possible to secure an independent position for Indian trade with Turkey.

MR. CHURCHILL: The proposal referred to by the hon. Member is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and before a decision is taken upon it full consideration will be given to its possible effect on the interests of the Indian and other merchants on the island.

Native Affairs in Natal.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the administration of Native affairs in Natal has been received; and, if so, when it would be possible to present it to the House.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Report has not yet been received. Inquiry is being made as to its progress.

MR. ALDEN: Can the hon. Gentleman say when the Colonial Vote will be taken?

MR. CHURCHILL: That Question should be addressed to the Leader of the House.

British Shipping Claims against Russia.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what has been the progress in the negotiations with the Russian Government in reference to the cases of the steamships "Allanton," "Knight Commander," "Malacca," and "Calchas;" and whether he intends to bring the subject before the Hague Conference.

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† See Col. 67.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir EDWARD GREY): "Allanton."—My right hon. friend begs to refer the hon. Member to his reply to the hon. Member for Hoxton on 22nd November last, stating that, in view of the fact that the Russian Goverment have again refused to entertain the claim, His Majesty's Government, after careful consideration with their legal advisers, have decided that there are not sufficient grounds for pressing the case. "Knight Commander."—His Majesty's Government have not yet received the answer of the Russian Government to their proposal that the claim should be referred to arbitration at the Hague. They are now again about to approach the Russian Government on the subject. "Malacca."—The claims of the interested parties, which are very numerous, and in respect of which a great amount of documentary evidence has to be examined, have been for some time before the Russian Government. His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg is taking all such steps as he properly can to expedite a settlement of the case. "Calchas."—His Majesty's Government are still in communication with the Russian Government with regard to this case. His Majesty's Government will urge that such cases as cannot be settled satisfactorily by direct negotiation should be referred to arbitration.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER: Practically the same Answer was given last year.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My hon. friend must realise that negotiations of this nature must absorb a great deal of time.

North Sea Convention, 1882.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Governments of Sweden and Norway have been asked, in accordance with the additional article of the North Sea Convention, 1882, to adhere to that Convention.

MR. RUNCIMAN: Yes, Sir, they were asked at the time the Convention was concluded. As regards Norway, His Majesty's Government suggested to the Norwegian Government that she should join soon after her separate recognition. She has not yet consented to do so.

Trawling in the North Sea.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Government will enter into negotiation with the North Sea Powers, with the view of closing against trawling such specified bays and firths as might be agreed on.

MR. RUNCIMAN: Such negotiations would probably involve the closing of waters in the neighbourhood of foreign countries to British vessels, and my right hon. friend cannot enter upon any negotiations which would involve such far-reaching consequences till the whole question of the policy concerned has been considered.

North Sea Fishery Investigations.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if, during the last five years, when the Biological Association have been investigating the North Sea, collecting specimens, etc., there is any record that their investigations have been examined, collated, tabulated, and brought up to date; and if, in view of the decision of the Treasury that the grant will be continued for another year, and that a Committee is appointed to consider the question in all its bearings, any further expenditure will be limited to completing the work in hand, and that the "Goldseeker" and "Huxley" will be set free and placed at the disposal of the Scottish and English fishery departments for the protection of the fishermen from the ravages of trawlers.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The record of the investigations covering the first two years' work (1902–3) are published in Command Papers 2612 and 2670 of 1905, if my hon. friend cares to consult them; further volumes are in the press, and I understand they will be published very soon. As regards the second part of the Question, the arrangement is that the investigations will be carried on as at present for another year pending the Committee's Report, and no change can therefore be made during that period in the purpose for which the two vessels mentioned are now employed.

Lutterworth Rabbit Snaring Convictions.

MR. LEHMANN (Leicestershire, Market Harborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the sentence passed by two Leicestershire justices at Lutterworth petty sessions on Thursday last, whereby Ernest Pike, charged with snaring rabbits upwards of five years ago, was practically consigned to prison for eight months, although the man declared that he had been earning his living honestly during the intervening five years, which does not appear to have been denied; and whether he will inquire into all the circumstances of the case with a view to revising the sentence if the facts are as stated.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): My attention had not been previously directed to this case, but I am making inquiries into it.

Jury Service.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has perused the remark made by Mr. Justice Darling in Court III., King's Bench, on 1st March, 1907, regarding the resummoning of jurors when only a short period had elapsed since the last service of such jurors, which the judge said was unreasonable, and to provide against which care might have been taken; and whether he will take such action as may be possible for the protection of individuals who are called several times in a given period during which others on the list altogether escape service.

MR. GLADSTONE: This is not a matter in which I have any authority to to take action, but the Under-Sheriff of London, to whom I have referred, points out that as there are over 16,000 jurors summoned during the year, it is impossible altogether to prevent the contingency of one being summoned twice within a short period, owing to a change of address or some other cause. With reference to Mr. Justice Darling's remarks, I am informed that if a juror having a certificate of exemption, and being again summoned, will send up the certificate with the summons, his name will be struck off the jury-panel by the officer of the court.

*MR. REES asked whether the hon. Gentleman was aware that the incidence of this obligation caused well-justified discontent, and that the inequality fell almost entirely upon clerks and other persons with comparatively small incomes.

MR. GLADSTONE said he had been aware of that for the last thirty years.

Women and Children in Public Houses.

MR. FIENNES (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any information from the police in the nature of Reports on the subject of women taking their infants and young children into the public houses in London and other large towns; and, if so, whether he will lay them upon the Table.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have no information of the kind indicated by my hon. friend which I can lay on the Table, but I am fully alive to the importance of this matter, and I am making inquiries on the subject in London and some of the other most populous centres.

Loans to Licensing Authorities.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state how many loans on the application of licensing authorities under the provision of The Licensing Act, 1904, Section 3, received the consent of the Secretary of State, and for what terms they were granted, in the years 1905 and 1906.

MR. GLADSTONE: Six loans on the security of compensation funds were sanctioned in the years 1905 and 1906. Of these, four were for a term of one year, one for two years, and one for two and a half years, the date of sanction in the last two cases being, respectively, February, 1906, and November, 1905.

Tuberculosis Milk.

MR. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, under the regulations of the Local Government Board, the owner of a cow certified by veterinary surgeons to be suffering from tuberculosis is entitled to sell the milk of such cow for human food, so long as the disease has not attacked the udder of the cow; whether the owner who is prohibited from offering for sale the milk of the cow, by reason that the animal is certified by veterinary surgeons to be suffering from tubercular disease of the udder, is entitled, under the regulations of the Board, to offer the animal for sale as a milch cow or for slaughter for human food; and whether in England, where a cow is found to be suffering from tubercular disease of the udder, there is any obligation under the regulations of the Board, either on the owner who has been in the habit of selling the milk of such cow or on the veterinary surgeon who has certified it to be suffering from tubercular disease, to make any notification of the occurrence of the disease to any public authority.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): The Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Orders of 1885 and 1899 prohibit the sale of the milk of a cow suffering from tubercular disease of the udder, but the prohibition does not extend to the milk of a cow otherwise affected by tuberculosis. These Orders deal with dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops, and do not relate to such matters as those referred to in the second part of the Question. Nor do they require notification in cases of the kind mentioned in the last part of the Question. Where, however, there is in force a Local Act containing what are known as the Milk and Tuberculosis Clauses, a dairyman who supplies milk within the district, and who has in his dairy a cow affected with tuberculosis of the udder, must give notice of the fact to the medical officer of health of the district.

MR. H. H. MARKS: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the statement in the second interim Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the relations of human and animal tuberculosis, that cow's milk containing bovine tubercle bacilli is clearly a cause of tuberculosis, and of fatal tuberculosis, in man, he will consider the necessity of measures more stringent than those at present enforced being taken to prevent the sale or the consumption of such milk.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am giving consideration to the Report of the Royal Commission, and in connection with it will bear in mind the point to which the hon. Member refers.

Grimsby Distress Committee.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to a Report submitted to the Grimsby Distress Committee wherein several cases of excessive overcrowding are mentioned, in one case it is stated that six separate families were living in a six-roomed house, each tenant paying 2s. 6d. to 3s. per week for a single room, and in other cases people are living under such conditions as to make physical health and moral decency impossible; and what action, if any, he proposes to take in this matter.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have not seen the Report to the Distress Committee referred to in the Question, but I am communicating with them on the subject.

Epsom Telephone Wire Dispute.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that certain telephone wires belonging to the Post Office have been carried across two properties known as Hylands and Hyland House, Epsom, without the consent of the owners or occupiers of the said properties; whether this was done with his authority; and whether he will take any and what steps to prevent similar trespasses occurring in other parts of the country.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): My attention has been called to the matter. I am having inquiry made.

Women Education Inspectors.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the President of the

Board of Education how many women are now employed as inspectors by the Board of Education on the elementary and secondary branches respectively; what are the duties and salaries attached to such offices; and are such appointments temporary or permanent.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The women inspectors in the service of the Board of Education are not attached to, nor employed exclusively in, any one branch of the Board, but are under the direction of the Chief Woman Inspector. The salary of this latter post, as of the fourteen other women inspectors, will be found set out fully in the Estimates, with the exception of two additional women inspectors temporarily employed at a salary of £250 per annum. The women inspectors of the Board are employed in general inspection, including the inspection of infant schools, elementary schools for girls, the training colleges for elementary school teachers (women), and the training schools for intending teachers of domestic subjects.

Brigg Election Literature.

MR. HEMMERDE (Denbighshire, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his notice has been called to a leaflet issued in thousands on the eve of the poll in the Brigg Division of Lincolnshire in the following terms and in the Liberal colours: Do you know the price of your tea is going up at once threepence a pound (see the daily papers), this is under a Radical Government, vote for Sheffield, who wants to make it cheaper; whether the issue of such a leaflet, containing what is obviously a deliberate false statement of fact, by a candidate or his agent can be dealt with under the criminal law or under the law relating to corrupt and illegal practices at Parliamentary elections; and, if the answer to the last question is in the negative, whether his Majesty's Government will consider the advisability of extending the criminal law and the law relating to corrupt and illegal practices at Parliamentary elections to cover all deliberate false statements of fact.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.) asked whether it was permissible under the rules of the House to put extracts or quotations from newspapers or leaflets in Questions. On other occasions he had had the sting taken out of Questions of his own.

MR. RAWLINSON asked whether it was in order for one hon. Member to impute to another in a Question a deliberate false statement of fact, more especially as in this case reference to the daily papers showed that the pamphlet was quite accurate.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must take the blame for this Question's having appeared on the Paper in this form. The hon. Member for East Denbighshire brought me the Question last Monday and proposed to ask it as a matter of urgency. I glanced hastily through the Question and saw that it was not a matter of urgency and did not come within the urgency rule; and I recommended him to put it down in the ordinary way. When it was handed to the clerks at the Table they understood that I had passed the Question, and therefore accepted it. If my attention had been called specifically to the form of the Question I certainly should not have passed it.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) asked whether the Attorney-General realised that in the last ten days tea had gone up 1d. or 1½d. in the pound.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir JOHN WALTON, Leeds, S.): I am interested in a pure proposition of law. The alleged misrepresentation contained in the leaflet to which my hon. friend refers does not reflect on the character or conduct of any person, but only on the Administration. There is not, so far as I am aware, any penalty under the criminal law or the Corrupt Practices Act which can be inflicted upon those who are responsible for the issue of the document. When the revision of the law relating to elections takes place, and it cannot, I think, be very long deferred, the suggestion of my hon. friend should receive the consideration which it deserves.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER: Is not this exactly the same statement which was issued by the Liberal Publication

League at the election in January last year?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. STANLEY WILSON: When the Attorney-General is considering that, I hope he will consider also the misrepresentations which have taken place on the subject of Chinese labour.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to make statements at question time.

Land Transfer.

MR. HILLS: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, seeing that the system of registration of title to land has been in operation for some years, and on the whole with success, he will consider the advisability of further examining the question of land transfer, with the object ultimately of making the transfer of land as simple and as cheap as is the transfer of stocks or shares.

SIR JOHN WALTON: There seems to be some question whether the system of registration has been effective. I have received a letter from the President of the Law Society stating that in his opinion it has been a failure. I fully sympathise with the object the hon. Member has in view, and I believe the subject is receiving the consideration of the Lord Chancellor.

Abbey Craig Quarries, Stirling.

MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that quarrying for whinstone on the Abbey Craig, Stirling, has been resumed after a cessation of upwards of twelve years; whether the County Council of Stirling propose to use steam engines in the quarry to crush the blocks into road metal there, which would necessarily cause much noise, smoke, and dust, in addition to the usual blasting, with its risk of accident to visitors and others and the Wallace monument; and, if so, whether care will be taken that the Abbey Craig, on which the national monument to Wallace stands, will not be injured by the quarrying.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I have made inquiries, and now learn that quarrying operations have not been resumed on the Abbey Craig. Fifteen years ago a quarry known as the Craigton Quarry was closed in deference to considerations of public convenience, and an application is now before me to give my consent to the opening of the Craigmill Quarry at the east end of the Abbey Craig, to which it is stated the same objections do not apply. Before a decision is given, the several questions referred to by my hon. friend shall be carefully considered.

Perth Prison.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland when the Return relating to transference of prisoners to Perth Prison, which was presented and ordered to be printed on 13th February, 1907, will be available for the use of Members.

MR. SINCLAIR: I understand that the Return will be in the hands of hon. Members to-morrow.

Irish Untenanted Lands—Administration of the Labourers Acts.

MR. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if it be the policy of the present Government to check the emigration of the young and healthy people, for want of land, from rural districts in Ireland which contain large untenanted areas, will he promote that policy so far as possible under existing law, and especially will he get the Local Government Board expressly to encourage the acquisition of tracts by the use of Form No. 6 under the Labourers Acts, and the exercise of the power conferred by Sections 8 and 20 of the Act of last year.

The hon. Member also had the following Questions on the Paper on the same subject:—

To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, in view of the actual inability of ratepayers and labourers to obtain Form No. 6, or any information on its use, the repeated assertions of clerks of district councils that neither this form nor instructions on the acquisition or disposal of tracts, under Sections 8 and 20 of the Labourers Act, have reached them, and the absence of the alleged instructions from the set of documents furnished by the Local Government Board to a Member of this House, will he say where those alleged instructions can be seen.

To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that rural councils have not been adequately instructed on the use of Form No. 6 and their powers under Section 8 of the Labourers Act, and seeing that want of knowledge on the part of councils of itself prevents a case from arising and frustrates the intentions of Parliament, and that labourers and the country may suffer in consequence, he will have Form No. 6 with practical instructions sent forthwith to every rural council, and the time extended three months for the completion of schemes in this respect.

To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Coole District Council has rejected all representations on Form No. 6 under the Labourers Acts, under the impression that the council has no power to use that form; and, as other councils in whose districts there is untenanted land available may, under grazier influence, act similarly, and no question then comes before the Local Government Board, will he have the powers of councils to use Form No. 6 authoritatively settled, instructions issued to the councils regarding it, and all representations on that form reconsidered by them.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The hon. Member appears to suggest that rural district councils have power, under the new Act, to establish small holdings by acquiring tracts for division among labourers without regard to the amount of land to be given in each case. The fact is that a rural district council can give no labourer more than one acre. The councils must, before acquiring any land, establish the necessity for its acquisition, and Section 8, which the hon. Member quotes, merely provides for the disposal of any superfluous land not required for the purposes of the Labourers Acts. Similarly, before proceeding under Section 20, the councils must show that the land is required for the purposes of their schemes. The primary object of the Labourers Acts appears to be the provision of proper houses for the labourers. Form 6 relates to the provision of allotments only. It is not within the province of the Local Government Board to influence rural district councils in favour of one rather than the other of these objects. Form 6 is of a very simple character, and it is held to be a mistake to send out elaborate instructions as to the use of so simple a form. I have already informed the hon. Member that rural district councils are obliged under the rules to keep a supply of these forms and to furnish a copy free of charge to every ratepayer and labourer who requires it. The Local Government Board are aware of no case in which a council has failed in its duty in this respect. The Local Government Board have no reason to believe that the Coole, or any other, district council have rejected representations for allotments upon the ground that they had no power to adopt such representations. The Coole Council adopted representations for ninety cottages and plots and passed applications for additional half-acres in the case of thirty existing cottages, but refused a number of applications, including twelve applications for allotments.

In reply to a further question by Mr. GINNELL,

MR. BIRRELL said: I am sorry there is a difference between the hon. Member and myself as to the construction of the Act. I am afraid I cannot agree with him.

Attacks on Irish Postmen.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in December last, at Ballinagree, near Macroom, a postman was robbed by two disguised men of several letters believed to contain writs or processes; that on 19th February, at Ballinagleeragh, county Leitrim, a postman was stopped by disguised men and robbed of twenty registered letters; that on the same day a postman from Doura, in the same locality, was also robbed of several registered letters; and whether anyone has been made amenable to justice in these cases.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by the police authorities that the facts are substantially as stated in the Question. The police have not succeeded in bringing the offenders to justice.

Attack on Doura Postboy.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a postboy from Doura, who succeeded in delivering registered letters, was, on the 20th February, attacked by a mob in Doura, and was with difficulty saved by the police from serious injury; and whether any persons have been made amenable for this attack, which occurred in the presence of the police.

MR. BIRRELL: Proceedings have been instituted by the police against fifteen persons in this case, and it would be undesirable to enter into particulars while the matter is *sub judice*.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): Will they be tried by a jury composed of members of the National Irish League?

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): Will the right hon. Gentleman find a niche at Madame Tussaud's for the hon. Member?

[No Answer was returned.]

Land Purchase in County Leitrim—Difficulty of Serving Writs.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in the district around Doura, county Leitrim, there is a general refusal on the part of tenants to pay rent unless landlords consent to sell their properties at tenants' prices or to the Estates Commissioners; that process servers dare not attempt to serve writs or processes; and that on the 12th instant a civil bill officer was driven out of the district; and whether, seeing that the district is in a state of disorder, steps will be taken to enforce the law.

MR. BIRRELL: I have no information as to the payment of rent in this district, but I understand that differences exist between landlords and tenants as to terms of purchase. On 12th February a civil bill officer was serving processes under police protection, when a number of persons assembled and signified their disapproval by shouting and jeering. No violence, however, was attempted or threatened. The police will afford all necessary protection to civil bill officers in the execution of their duty.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): Doura is in county Cavan; is it not the fact that there have been no prisoners for trial in that county since the July assize, 1906?

MR. BIRRELL: I am obliged to the hon. Member for his geographical information. I cannot answer his question without notice.

MR. DOLAN (Leitrim, N.): Is it not the fact that all these disturbances are due to the delay of the Estates Commissioners in reinstating evicted tenants? Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to hasten their operations?

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S): Is not the inability of the process servers to serve due to the crowds which gather to intimidate them?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no information beyond what I have given. I agree that the work of reinstatement is a matter of urgency, and I am doing all I can to facilitate it.

Compensation Claims for Malicious Injury.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the number of cases which came before the recent courts of quarter sessions at Limerick, Ballyshannon, Roscommon, Dungarvan, Dundalk, Tralee, Claremorris, Tuam, Ennis, Tullamore, Loughrea, and other places, in which damages were awarded for malicious destruction of property and injury to live stock; whether he will state the number of these cases and the total amount awarded in damages; and whether in any of these cases, and, if so, how many, the police have discovered the perpetrators of the outrages.

MR. BIRRELL: The number of cases in which compensation for malicious injury was awarded at the recent quarter sessions held at the places named was twenty-nine, and the total amount of compensation awarded was £1,232. In three of the cases persons have been proceeded against and are awaiting trial at the assizes.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): Is there no means by which Orangemen can be prevented maligning their countrymen in this way?

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: How is it that there was so ridiculously small a number of persons brought to justice?

MR. BIRRELL: I can only give the information I have received.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Is it due to the supineness of the police?

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Would it not be well to inquire into the number of offences of this character which occur in all parts of the country, England as well as Ireland?

MR. BIRRELL: I quite agree that a comparision would not be unfavourable to the country which the hon. Gentleman represents.

MR. MOORE: Will the right hon. Gentleman consent to publish the Return of agrarian crime which his predecessor refused?

[No Answer was returned.]

Land Commission Staff.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is in contemplation to increase the number of examiners or assessors on the staff of the Land Commission, consequent upon the appointment of Mr. Justice Dodd as a third Judicial Commissioner.

MR. BIRRELL: The reply is in the affirmative as regards examiners, and in the negative as regard assessors.

Claremorris Union Clerk.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in appointing a clerk to the union, the Claremorris board of guardians have acted upon a resolution passed by the priests that all candidates for the position must have a character from their parish priest; whether this resolution debarred all Protestants and some Nationalists; whether he is aware that the proceedings of the board at the election were very disorderly; and whether, in the circumstances, the appointment will be approved by the Local Government Board.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that a resolution to the effect mentioned was passed by the local clergy, but was not adopted by the guardians, with whom the appointment of clerk of the union rests. In advertising for candidates, the guardians placed no restrictions of the nature suggested, and none of the applications received were rejected from consideration. The Local Government Board are satisfied that the recent election of the clerk was regular and legal, and that the person elected is competent, and they have therefore sanctioned the appointment.

MR. MOORE: Was the resolution not adopted by the rural council?

MR. BIRRELL: I am concerned with the guardians.

MR. MOORE: Surely the right hon. Gentleman knows that the rural council and the guardians are the same?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to give information.

Tubbercurry Evicted Tenant.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the question of the reinstatement of John Quinn, an evicted tenant on the Gore Booth estate, situate in Lavagh, Tubbercurry, county Sligo, was by consent of all parties, landlord, evicted tenant, and new occupier left for settlement to the Estates Commissioners in 1905; whether Edward Layng, the present occupier, subscribed his name to a document, witnessed by the Reverend B. J. Quinn, P.P., by which he, Layng, agreed to abide by the decision of the Estates Commissioners as arbitrators in the case; whether, as a result of their investigations, the Commissioners decided to give Mr. Layng a sum of £190 as compensation, or its equivalent value in land; whether he is aware that Layng has refused this offer, although holding in a scheduled congested district, already, fifty-two Irish acres in Lisaneagh, forty in Ballyara, and twenty in Ballyglass; and whether, seeing that the buildings on the Lavagh farm were all erected by the evicted tenant John Quinn, and that Layng is not entitled to any compensation, steps will be taken by the Estates Commissioners to reinstate Quinn and keep Layng up to his agreement.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that two policemen are now, and have for two years past, been engaged in the work of herding the Quinn evicted farm, situate at Lavagh, Tubbercurry, county Sligo; will he say whether these men are maintained at the public expense; and whether, if the present occupier, Edward Layng, has broken his agreement, by which he bound himself to abide by the decision of the Estates Commissioners in the matter of the reinstatement of the evicted tenant, the Government will now consider the advisability of withdrawing these policemen from the duty in which they are engaged.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by the Inspector-General that it has been found necessary for some time past to afford protection by police patrols to Edward Layng, the tenant of the evicted farm in question. It is, however, quite incorrect to suggest that the police have acted as herds of the farm. As regards the first Question, the Estates Commissioners understand that Layng has accepted their proposals for the settlement of the case, and that the evicted tenant will be restored forthwith.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for South Tipperary, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if it is to be understood that a farmer, who possessed more than one holding, but had been evicted from one because of a rack rent, though having a valuable interest in the place because of the buildings and other improvements having been created by himself or his predecessors, is not to have his claim for reinstatement recognised by the Estates Commissioners, especially where the holding has been taken by a professional grabber.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have not decided on the adoption of any general practice such as is mentioned in the Question. In dealing with each case which comes before them, they have regard to the particular circumstances of the case.

Kilross Evicted Holding.

MR. DILLON: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Tipperary, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the reason why the Estates Commissioners have failed to purchase from Count Moore the evicted holding of Mrs. Moroney, Kilross, Tipperary, and give the amounts demanded by the landlord and offered by the Estates Commissioners.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners upwards of a year ago informed the owner of the price they were prepared to advance for the purchase by the evicted tenant of her former holding, but up to the present the owner has not agreed to accept that price. It is not the practice of the Commissioners to make any public statement as to the prices offered or demanded in such cases.

Professional Grabbers.

MR. DILLON: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Tipperary, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that persons known as professional grabbers have taken evicted holdings, some before but the greater number since the passing of the Land Act of 1903, with the object of levying blackmail on the Estates Commissioners and evicted tenants by demanding compensation for their interests in such holdings; whether he can give an approximate number of those persons with the amounts demanded; and whether he will see that no public money shall be used for remunerating those who attempt to defeat the declared objects of the Land Act regarding evicted tenants.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they are not aware of any such practice as is referred to in the Question. If any specific case of the kind should be brought to their notice, they would inquire into it.

MR. LONSDALE: Can the right hon. Gentleman state what is the interpretation of the term "professional land grabber?"

MR. BIRRELL: No. I do not know.

Dopping Estate, County Longford.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any proposal has yet been made to or by the Estates Commissioners for the purchase of the Dopping estate at Derrycarsan, county Longford: and, if so, will care be taken to protect the interests of the evicted tenants on that property.

MR. BIRRELL: Proceedings for the sale of this estate have been instituted before the Estates Commissioners, who will pay due regard to the claims of the evicted tenants when they are dealing with the estate.

Roberts Estate, Newtown Cashel.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any negotiations have been entered into by the Estates Commissioners for the purchase of the Roberts estate at Newtown Cashel, county Longford.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that no proceedings have been instituted before them for the purchase of this estate.

Churchtown Labourers Cottage Sites.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board take sufficient precautions with regard to the selection of sites marked out for labourers cottages and plots of land; is the Board aware that at the last meeting of the Mallow District Council, held to consider representations under The Labourers' Act, 1906, the labourers complained that three sites marked out at Churchtown were unsuitable as being swampy bad land; whether the inspectors exercise proper care in the selection of these sites; will the Board entertain an appeal made on behalf of these labourers; and whether, with a view to the proper and economical working of an Act intended to improve the condition of the rural workers of Ireland, the Board will issue a circular to the several district councils asking that the utmost precautions should be taken in the selection of suitable sites and the erection of the cottages.

MR. BIRRELL: The selection of sites to be included in an improvement scheme rests with the rural district council, and not with the Local Government Board's inspector, as the question supposes. When, however, a scheme has been framed, it is submitted to the inspector for approval and he rejects any sites which he finds to be unsuitable. The Local Government Board have already issued a circular to rural district councils giving full instructions for the guidance of the local committees appointed to select the sites. I have sent a copy of the circular to the hon. Member.

Section 7, Irish Land Act, 1887.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has been aware that, during the quarter ended 30th September, 1906, 711 tenancies were determined in Ireland under Section 7 of The Land Act, 1887, and 2,191 during the whole of the year 1906; and whether, in view of the recent land legislation involving the transfer of holdings from owner to occupier, the Government will consider the advisability of repealing a section under which so many occupiers are deprived of all legal rights under the Land Purchase and all other Land Acts from 1881 onwards.

MR. BIRRELL: The figures quoted in the Question are correctly taken from the Returns presented to Parliament. I find that the hon. Member put a similar question on 20th March last,† when my predecessor informed him of the reasons why the Government does not intend to propose the repeal of the section mentioned. The section provided a right of redemption which may be exercised within a period of six months, and upon such exercise all rights are restored to the tenant. Of the 2,191 persons served with eviction notices under Section 7 in 1906, only 124, or about 5 per cent., were actually evicted. The Government are advised that a repeal of the section might prove to be an injury rather than a benefit to the tenants, seeing that it might involve the actual eviction of tenants who, from some temporary cause, might be unable to pay their rents.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cliv., 228–9.

MR. FLYNN: Has not the hon. Member for South Tyrone, who was largely concerned in the passing of this section, long since expressed regret at his action?

MR. LUNDON: Are there not thousands of people in Ireland who do not know that they are evicted tenants—who were simply served with writs that allowed the redemption time to run out?

[No Answer was audible.]

Munster District Councils and the Labourers Acts.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board has kept itself informed as to recent proceedings at district councils in Cork, Kerry, and other parts of Munster, in connection with representations under the new Labourers Act; whether he is aware that at many of the council meetings numbers of labourers, naturally anxious to secure cottages and suitable plots of land, have attended and a certain amount of confusion has marked the proceedings; and whether the Board will communicate with the district councils suggesting that, where bodies of labourers have retained solicitors for the better presentation of their claims, the solicitors should be allowed to attend and plead, with a view to securing more regularity and greater despatch of business.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board are aware of the circumstances mentioned in the Question. The Board do not consider it desirable to make any such communication to rural district councils as the hon. Member suggests. In the Board's opinion, it is for the councils themselves to determine whether labourers shall be allowed to attend in person when their applications for cottages are being considered.

Disturbances at New Quay, County Clare.

MR. MOORE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if the district of New Quay, county Clare, has been, and still is, in a disturbed condition; if Constable O'Shea has been prominent in bringing offenders to justice; if the Rev. Mr. Newell, the parish priest and member of the local branch of the United Irish League, has stated publicly he will have Constable O'Shea transferred from the district; if communications have been received by the authorities from the Rev. Mr. Newell complaining of this constable and requesting his removal; if the constable will be transferred without public inquiry; and what action he proposes to take.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by the police authorities that a year ago the district of New Quay was somewhat disturbed, but is now in a very quiet condition. Constable O'Shea has not been particularly prominent in bringing offenders to justice. So far as the police are aware, the Rev. Mr. Newell has not publicly stated that he would have the constable transferred. It is not the case that the reverend gentleman has requested the constable's removal, but the man himself has asked to be transferred to another station, and the County Inspector intends to comply with his request.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) asked whether if a request was made for inquiry into the action of the police, the Chief Secretary would consider the advisability of granting it.

MR. BIRRELL: I will consider it.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: On a point of order, I wish to ask whether it is in order for damaging statements, such as that the district of New Quay, county Clare, is in a disturbed condition, to be made in the Question, when that statement has no foundation in fact.

MR. MOORE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. I had better answer the Question put to me. Whether a district is disturbed or not in any county in Ireland is very much a matter of opinion. The only person who can settle it is the Chief Secretary, and these Questions elicit facts from him which it is most desirable, no doubt, that the

House should have. I cannot take it upon myself to say that it is improper.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask whether it is in order for an hon. Member to put on the notice Paper a question making an allegation of a discreditable character when there is no evidence for the statement whatever, according to the Chief Secretary.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not see anything objectionable in the Question. The hon. Member might think the district is disturbed.

MR. MOORE: May I ask the Chief Secretary whether it has not been declared by the Judge in his charge to the Grand Jury this week that the whole of the county of Clare is in a disturbed condition?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member should give notice of that Question.

MR. MOORE (who rose amid loud NATIONALIST cries of "Order"): I should not have asked the Question had it not been for the statements of the hon. Member for East Clare.

MR WILLIAM REDMOND: There is more disturbance in Armagh than in the whole of the rest of Ireland.

Evening Schools in Ireland.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the explanation given by the Commissioners of National Education for the decrease in the number of evening schools in Ireland during the last year; and if several inspectors have discountenanced such schools in their districts in every way possible.

MR. BIRRELL: Prior to 1900, there were only twenty-one evening schools. In 1901 new rules were made giving increased remuneration for evening schools, and as a result the number increased to 1036 in 1902. The present number is 472. In the opinion of the Commissioners of National Education, the falling off is due to the fact that teachers generally found the strain of evening teaching too much for them after their day's work. The Commissioners are not aware that any of the Inspectors have discountenanced evening schools. If any specific complaint to that effect should be made to them, they would have it investigated.

Revaluation of Dublin.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is his intention to have a revision of the valuation of Dublin for the purpose of local taxation; and whether the present valuation is understated by a sum of £250,000.

MR. BIRRELL: A revaluation of the city of Dublin is at present in progress, and until it has been completed it would not be possible to state whether the existing valuation is below the rateable valuation as defined by Statute.

Belfast Police Inquiry.

COLONEL McCALMONT (Antrim, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commission that was held in Belfast last June and July to inquire into certain alleged irregularities in connection with the Royal Irish Constabulary in that city, made any report to the Government; did they make any suggestions or recommendations for the increased efficiency of the Belfast police; if so, have such been carried out; did they inquire into the allegations as to corrupt practices on the part of the police, who were alleged to be in collusion with criminals; were these allegations substantiated or disproved; were the suggestions as to partiality and partisanship on the part of the police authorities in Belfast borne out by the finding of the Commission; and will the Report be laid upon the Table of the House.

MR. BIRRELL: This Commission was appointed at the instance of my predecessor with the object of clearing up certain matters connected with the organisation and discipline of the Belfast police force. In reply to a Question last session, Mr. Bryce stated that the result of the inquiry was to show that there were no important or substantial grounds for dissatisfaction in connection with the organisation and discipline of the force. Mr. Bryce fully considered the question of laying the Report upon the Table of the House, and decided that it was not necessary or desirable to present it. I do not propose to reopen the Question.

COLONEL MCCALMONT: I wish to ask whether it is not most unfair and grossly unjust to the Royal Irish Constabulary that they should not have the same publicity given to the Report of the Commission as was given to the original allegation; and further is there any precedent for the Government's suppressing the Report of such a Commission?

MR. BIRRELL: I think the Government must take into consideration the character of the Report and how far its publicity would benefit the public. I have said in answer to the Question that the Report finds there is no important or substantial grounds for dissatisfaction with the discipline and organisation of the police force. I do not think it is deserving of publicity.

MR. MOORE asked whether the charge made against the police was that they had been guilty of undue favouritism, and whether the Report found there was no foundation for that statement.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman inform us whether it is not the unanimous desire of the police to have the Report published?

MR. BIRRELL: The police not having seen the Report I do not know that I should consider their wishes in the matter. The Government having considered it, and desiring to be perfectly fair to the police, do not consider it in the public interests to publish it.

MR. SLOAN: I should like to ask whether it is intended to make any change in regard to the Constabulary, and, if so, what, as the result of the Report.

MR. BIRRELL: The hon. Member must give me notice of that.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) asked whether this Commission consisted of three gentlemen—one who held a Government appointment, another who had just been given one, and a third who was looking for one; whether the Chief Secretary was aware that they made no serious effort to investigate the material charges in regard to the police and did not make any effort to get the evidence of material witnesses; and further that the findings of the Commission deserved no public confidence whatever.

[No Answer was returned.]

Out-Relief in the Clifden Union.

MR. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to a resolution of the Clifden Board of Guardians on the 20th February, in which the guardians refer to the increased number of applications for outdoor relief, and in which the guardians declare that, owing to the already excessively high rates pressing on a people universally poor, they are unable to grant all the deserving relief demanded; and whether under these circumstances, steps will at once be taken to construct the pier in Clifden Harbour promised four years ago under the Marine Works Act.

MR. BIRRELL: I have received the resolution referred to. The question of constructing a pier at Clifden under the Marine Works Act has, I find, been under consideration for some time past, and a plan of the proposed works has recently been sent to the Galway County Council for examination, in connection with the condition that they shall undertake certain ancillary works.

Case of Mrs. Kate Scanlan.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a widow lady, named Mrs. Kate Scanlan, tenant on the Blacker Douglas estate at Ballylongford, North Kerry, who was evicted from her farm, containing over 100 acres of land, owing to an administration suit brought against her by her brother-in-law, a Reverend Robert Scanlan, since deceased, and whose case is in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, was taken to gaol on the 18th instant for retaking possession of her home, accompanied by four car loads of police and bailiffs; whether he is aware that it was done on the application of a solicitor in Dublin, named Figgis, who purchased, for a small sum of money, the plaintiff's (her brother-in-law's) interest in the farm previous to his death; whether under these circumstances, he will take steps to see, as the sale of the estate is nearly completed and Figgis recognised by the Estates Commissioners as the tenant, that Mrs. Scanlan's interest is safeguarded; and whether he can say on whose authority the police took part in taking Mrs. Scanlan to prison.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether an inspector of the Estates Commissioners inquired into the case of Mrs. Kate Scanlan, of Tullahennell, Ballylongford, county Kerry, evicted tenant on the Blacker Douglas estate, which has been sold under the Land Act of 1903; if so, will he say who he was, and what are his qualifications for the position, and what was the nature of his Report to the Commissioners; and whether he was fully aware of the circumstances by which Mr. T. Frederick Figgis, solicitor, 67, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin, acquired the legal interest in the farm before he made it.

I beg further to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners, on the report of their inspector, have recognised Mr. T. Frederick Figgis, solicitor, 67, Sackville Street, Dublin, as the tenant entitled to purchase the farm on the Blacker Douglas estate, in North Kerry, over which he has been appointed receiver by the court in the administration suit pending in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, and from which he evicted Mrs. Kate Scanlan, who has been committed to prison for keeping possession of the same; and whether before the sale of this farm is completed, he will inquire fully into the matter, with the view to safeguarding Mrs. Scanlan's interest in it.

MR. BIRRELL: The Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary informs me that, on the requisition of the Sub-Sheriff for Kerry, four police, not four car loads of police, were supplied to protect him in executing a writ of the Court of Chancery for the committal of Mrs. Scanlan to gaol for contempt of court in taking illegal possession. The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the question of reinstating Mrs. Scanlan, whose case certainly appears to be a very hard one, but they could not come to terms with Mr. Figgis who is in legal occupation. They will, however, consider Mrs. Scanlan's application for a holding should they acquire untenanted land in the neighbourhood. The Commissioners understand that the tenant's interest was put up for sale in an administration suit, and that Mr. Figgis bought it. An agreement for the purchase by Mr. Figgis of the holding under the Land Acts has recently been lodged with the Commissioners, together with other purchase agreements connected with the same estate. The Commissioners will consider the application for advances when the estate comes before them in its order of priority, but this cannot be for a considerable time. The Commissioners obtained a full report on the case from one of their inspectors, but they do not think it desirable to publish the name of the inspector who acts in a particular case, or the contents of the report. The Commissioners themselves are responsible for the action which they may take upon their inspectors' reports.

Irish Land Finance.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, seeing that out of the applications for advances pending, amounting to £31,633,776, there are estates sufficiently advanced so far as title, etc., is concerned to absorb the £1,635,207 in the hands of the Estates Commissioners, he will say why this amount is not immediately paid out.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that advances are being made with as much rapidity as possible. The cases are dealt with in their order of priority, and the Commissioners make advances according as their requisitions in regard to title, security, survey, and such matters are complied with by the vendors.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Seeing that the Commissioners have £1,635,000 in hand, cannot steps be taken to give priority to those estates which are ready for settlement?

MR. BIRRELL: I will place that suggestion before the Estates Commissioners. I am as anxious as anybody to promote a settlement.

MR. MOORE: Is the continued absence of Mr. Commissioner Bayley the cause of the delay.

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

Mr. Figgis' Claim Against the Scanlan Estate.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Reverend Robert Scanlan, the administrator and one of the next-of-kin of the estate of Eugene Scanlan, deceased, assigned his interest in the estate shortly before his death, in the year 1902, to Mr. Figgis, of Dublin, his solicitor, for a sum of £50, and that Mr. Figgis continued the proceedings in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, and was appointed receiver over the estate, there being no defence to the suit; whether he is aware that Mr. Figgis now wants £650 from Mrs. Scanlan for his interest before giving up his claim on the farm; and whether, as she did not defend the suit in court for want of means, he will ascertain in what way the sum of £650 is ascertained previous to the purchase by Mr. Figgis of the farm from the landlord under The Land Act, 1903.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by the Registrar of the Chancery Division that the administration suit in question was instituted in 1899, and that on the death of the plaintiff in 1906, an order was made by the Court for the continuance of the proceedings in the name of Mr. Figgis, who had acted as solicitor to the plaintiff. The Court had no cognisance of the alleged dealings between Mr. Figgis and the original plaintiff. I am not aware that Mr. Figgis has made the demand referred to in the Question. If his conduct as a solicitor is impugned, the proper course would be to lodge a complaint with the Incorporated Law Society who would investigate it. The Estates Commissioners will consider all matters which they have power to deal with, when Mr. Figgis' application comes before them.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: How is the sum of £650 made up?

MR. BIRRELL said he did not think it was part of the duty of the Commissioners to go into that.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Was the inspector who inquired into this claim a competent man to deal with it? Will the right hon. Gentleman convince me of that? What were his qualifications?

*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman cannot be expected to answer that to-day.

Alleged Dynamite Outrage at Cloghroe.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he has ascertained the particulars of the dynamite outrage perpetrated near Cloghroe, in the Parliamentary division of Mid Cork; and, if so, will he state whether the perpetrators have been brought to justice.

MR. BIRRELL: The police authorities inform me that this case is still under investigation, and that being so, it is not desirable to make any public statement regarding it at present. The police have not made any arrest in connection with the matter.

MR. FLYNN: Is there any foundation for the statement that this thing ever occurred?

MR. BIRRELL: That is part of the inquiry.

Kilnamartyra Disturbances.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that shortly before daybreak on the 27th February last a body of men numbering about 500 made a determined attack on the county sub-sheriff of Cork, a party of bailiffs, and Royal Irish Constabulary, on the estate at Kilnamartyra, between Macroom and Ballyvourney, county Cork; and whether any persons have been brought to justice in connection with the outrage.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that the facts are as stated, save that the attacking party consisted of about fifty, not 500, persons. The police were unable to bring any persons to justice, as, owing to the darkness, no one was identified.

Attacks on Irish Postmen.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the number and particulars of outrages on Post Office servants reported to the police authorities in Ireland during the year ending 28th February last, the counties in which they occurred, and in what instances the perpetrators were brought to justice.

MR. BIRRELL: The police authorities inform me that during the period mentioned there were four cases of the nature referred to. They are the cases mentioned in the Questions of the hon. Member for Mid Armagh which I have now answered.† In one of the cases proceedings have been instituted against fifteen persons.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): How many Post Office servants were injured in England in the same period?

[No Answer was returned.]

County Down and the Labourers Act.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the calculations in respect of the current financial year, necessary to enable him to furnish the amount of Exchequer Grant which will be available for county Down under the Labourers Act of 1906, will be completed by 1st April.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board anticipate that the calculation of the amount of the Exchequer Grant available for county Down will be completed by 1st April.

Mansfield Estate Dispute.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been called to the case of George Diver, a tenant on the Mansfield estate, near Killygordon, county Donegal, who has been deprived by the landlord of a portion of his holding; and whether he will direct an inspector to be sent down to inquire into the nature of the tenancy of the late John Diver, the present tenant's father, the rent that was paid by him, and the date that two separate rents were joined in one receipt, with a view to George Diver getting back the portion that has been taken away from him, before the Commissioners sanction the sale of the estate, the purchase agreements of which have been signed.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners will have this matter inquired into by their inspector, who is about to visit the estate.

Antrim and the Labourers Act.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Exchequer Grant to county Antrim, for the purposes of the Labourers Acts, of £2,400 per annum has, by the Labourers' Act of last session, been reduced to £392 per annum; and, if so, whether the difference between these two sums will now have to be borne by the ratepayers.

MR. BIRRELL: The fact is as stated. The difference between the two sums must, of course, be borne by the ratepayers, in so far as it is not met by the rents on the cottages. Against this the ratepayers have the set off given by the improved terms for loans under the new Act. Even if the entire £2,000 should fall upon the rates, they would only be affected to the extent of five-sixths of a penny in the pound.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Is it not the fact that the authorities in county Antrim have refused to put the Labourers Act in force?

[No Answer was returned.]

Lord Clanricarde's Estate.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R. Holderness): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, since his accession to the office of Chief Secretary, his attention has been drawn to the intimidation which exists in and around the town of Loughrea; whether he will call for a special Report from the county inspector of Galway on the condition of the Loughrea district; and whether he will lay such Report upon the Table of this House.

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† See Col. 796.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.) asked whether the property around Loughrea was not owned by Lord Clanricarde, who refused to reply to the memorial forwarded to him by his tenants; whether at the last sessions several of his tenants did not appear in Court and satisfy the Judge that they paid rent ranging from two to one and a half years in the last eight months; and whether the Chief Secretary would request the county inspector to give particulars in his next Report.

Mr. BIRRELL: The police authorities have kept me fully informed of the condition of the Loughrea district. It would not be in accordance with practice to lay upon the Table of the House the police reports, which are made for the information of the Executive Government. The police are taking all possible measures for the preservation of the peace. In answer to the hon. Member for Galway, some of his statements are facts within common knowledge. Everyone is generally aware that this estate is Lord Clanricarde's, and that much of the disturbance and disloyalty there existing are due to the unfortunate relations between him and his tenants.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG inquired whether, in view of the persistent charges of lawlessness in Galway and of the denials by hon. Gentlemen below the gangway and the constant denials by the Chief Secretary, the Government would not grant an inquiry into the state of Galway.

Mr. BIRRELL said he must take the responsibility of dealing with the police reports received, and he was satisfied that their publication would not produce concord in Ireland.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: In view of the repeated attempts to misrepresent the condition of Ireland with regard to violence, will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the condition of crime in England and particularly in the Holderness Division?

Captain CRAIG: At whose expense?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to put a question to another hon. Member.

Kenmare Rent Appeals.

Mr BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that about a dozen tenants in the Kenmare Rural District, who had rents fixed over three years ago and then lodged appeals, were notified, about six weeks ago, that their appeals would be heard at Killarney on 26th February, and that their names appeared in the list for that sitting; whether he is aware that a second list was issued, about a fortnight ago, which did not contain their names, and that they were notified that their cases would not be heard; and whether, in view of the fact that in some of these cases sales are pending, and that, unless their appeals are heard, they will have to purchase on the basis of the old rents, he will state why their names were struck out; and when will the Commission sit again to hear these cases.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Land Commission inform me that the facts are as stated in the Question. The preliminary list contained a notice that the final list would include as many of the cases as the Judicial Commissioner considered could be heard during the sitting. It was found impossible to hear all the cases included in the preliminary list. The excluded cases will be heard at the next sitting at Killarney in July.

River Feale Fishery Regulations.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the fact that the fishing season does not commence in the River Feale, in the county of Limerick, until the 1st May, notwithstanding the fact that the river is full of spring fish, in consequence of which regulation the three best months of the year for fishing have passed by, he will take steps at an early date to introduce legislation with the view to empowering a local representative body to alter this and other grievances of the kind, with the view to encouraging love of sport.

Mr. BIRRELL: I am afraid that I cannot add anything to the reply which

I gave to the hon. Member's Question on this subject on 27th February.†

Dublin School of Art.

Mr. GWYNN (Galway): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland for what reason the appointment of a headmaster for the Dublin School of Art has been deferred for a period of two years; for what reason no successor has been appointed to the late headmistress of the same school, whose employment ceased four years ago; why, if no suitable candidates were discoverable for a permanent appointment, temporary appointments could not be made in order to give proper training to the present body of art students; and what has been done with the money saved by leaving the school for four years without a headmistress, and for two years without either headmistress or headmaster.

Mr. BIRRELL: The appointments in question have been suspended in view of the fact that a Committee was appointed to inquire into the Metropolitan School of Art and the Royal Hibernian Academy. The Report of the Committee has only recently been received, and its recommendations are now under consideration. While the offices have been in abeyance, temporary teachers have been appointed and paid from the sums available for the salaries of such offices. Any unexpended balance of these salaries is surrendered to the Exchequer.

Irish Telephone Service.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether any progress has been made with the plan proposed by his predecessor in office to give a telephone service to towns on the main railway lines of Ireland; and, if not, when such arrangements are likely to be made.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think the hon. Member is under a misapprehension in supposing that any general plan was proposed by my predecessor for giving a telephone service to towns on main lines of railways in Ireland. I have, however, been giving careful attention to all proposals for the extension of the telephone service in Ireland, and Post Office exchanges have recently been opened, or are under construction, in Armagh, Castle Bellingham, Cookstown, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Killarney, Omagh, Randalstown, and Skerries (county Dublin). Extensions of the Post Office trunk line system have also been made to serve exchanges of the National Telephone Company in Cahir, Clonmel and Tralee.

Drumlish Postal Arrangements.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he still refuses to allow the postman who brings the mid-day letters to Drumlish to remain for one hour per diem there pending the writing and despatching of replies to letters on the English mail.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I fear I can only repeat the Answer I gave the hon. Member in November last.‡ The loss on the present service is already so heavy that further expenditure would not be justified under existing conditions.

Glencuthane Postal Arrangements.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that there is only one delivery of letters in the week in the Glencuthane district, near Kilorglin, and that inconvenience is thereby caused; and will he have inquiries made with a view to establishing a delivery in this district on three days in the week.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have called for a report on this subject, and on its receipt I will send the hon. Member a reply.

Postal Holidays in Belfast.

Mr. SLOAN: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that certain sub-offices in Ireland are allowed to close on 17th March, Bank Holiday, he will extend the privilege to Belfast.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: On the 17th instant the usual Sunday hours will be observed at all offices in Ireland. On the 18th in places where St. Patrick's Day is kept as a business holiday post offices will be allowed to close as on other Bank Holidays, but in Belfast the day is not kept as a business holiday and the usual postal facilities will necessarily have to be afforded to the public.

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† See (4) *Debates* clxx., 63.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, clxv., 126.

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can now say when the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill will be introduced.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs): I am afraid that I cannot yet fix a time.

Religious Instruction in Elementary Schools.

Mr. PARTINGTON (Derbyshire, High Peak): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he is prepared to suggest a conference of representatives of the Protestant Churches in England and Wales with a view to their framing a syllabus of religious instruction for all elementary schools under their management.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, Sir, I think not. The Protestant Churches in England and Wales are, of course, perfectly free to meet and take counsel together and endeavour to arrive at an understanding. But I think my hon. friend will see that it hardly comes within my province to take any initiative in the convening of such an assembly.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Perhaps the Prime Minister will give the House some information with regard to the course of business in the immediate future?

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN stated that to-morrow the business would be Navy Estimates, Vote A and Votes 1 and 10. On Monday next the Civil Service Vote on Account would be taken, the vote for the Colonial Office being first.

NEW BILLS.

SCHOOL BOARDS CONFERENCES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To provide for expenses incurred in School Boards in Scotland in relation to School Board Conferences," presented by Mr. Eugene Wason; supported by Mr. Cochrane, Mr. Crombie, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson, and Mr. Younger; to be read a second time upon Monday 18th March, and to be printed. [Bill 97.]

OUTDOOR RELIEF (PENSIONERS) BILL.

"To place Naval, Army, and Civil Pensioners in the same position as members of Friendly Societies, in respect of Outdoor Relief," presented by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald; supported by Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Richards, Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Crooks; to be read a second time upon Thursday 21st March, and to be printed. [Bill 98.]

PURCHASE OF LAND (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

*Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) in asking leave to introduce the Purchase of Land (England and Wales) Bill, apologised for taking advantage of the ten minutes rule. He did so, however, firstly, because he considered the Bill to be more important and more urgent than any other measure before Parliament, and secondly, although it was a political measure in the old and true sense of the word—that was, referring to general economic conditions and general conditions of prosperity,—it was not a political measure in the Party sense of the term. The object of the Bill was to restore in this country the two classes of cultivators that used to exist, namely, the yeoman farmer and the peasant proprietor. These two classes were responsible, almost wholly, for the making of England and our great Empire. Besides that, he believed that the operation of the Bill would gradually, but surely, solve those distressing problems in our midst which were occupying the thoughts of every serious man; the problem of the unemployed, the slum problem, and the destitution in the country. They were endeavouring to solve the problems by palliative measures and especially by charity. But such measures and the so-called charity were gradually and surely sapping the independence and manhood of the people. He believed the provisions of the Bill were calculated to stem the depopulation of our country sides. According to the last census only 23 per cent. of our population was found in the rural districts.

If they deducted the resident population, the manufacturers in the rural districts, the vast number of men engaged in and connected with sport, they would find that the residue of those actually engaged in agriculture to be very small indeed. There was nothing approaching such a minimum in any other country in Europe. They might talk about our trade and commerce, our riches and our luxuries, but he ventured to say, without fear of contradiction, that no nation, either now or in the past—the ancient past—ever remained long in the front rank after agriculture had been ruined and had decayed. But on that great industry and the numerous rural population consequent upon its prosperity, must depend always the fighting power, the resisting power, the physical health and permanent prosperity of the nation. Under the present conditions their Army Bills would fail. Another result of the operation of this measure would be the gradual building up of, and ultimately a vast addition to our food supply. We were the only nation in Europe which depended for its daily bread upon over-sea supplies. The right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War a short time ago said that we were an island fortress. That was a figurative expression, but one which was true. We were a fortress of 40,000,000 of people and a fortress which was unvictualled. They all knew the ultimate fate of fortresses which were in that condition. We spent millions on our Army and Navy and optimistic persons like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean declared that the Navy would effectively protect our grain-laden ships. Under that head he would suggest that the right hon. Gentleman and the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition should form themselves into a deputation, and go into the City and ask the body of underwriters whether they would insure vessels under such conditions. The reply would be that they would not insure at all, or only upon such terms as would raise the price of food in this country to famine rates. Under such conditions the working classes of this country and the poorer classes who, with their wives and families, would have to bear the brunt of suffering and starvation, would demand, and rightly demand, that peace should be made at any price, or on any conditions, no matter how humiliating. His own opinion, and it was backed up by a number of admirals of this country, was that we could not carry on war for six months with any first class European Power. There were abundant other arguments, economic and social, in favour of his measure. He regretted that it was not in better hands than his own. He could wish that someone more responsible, either on his own side of the House or on the other side, would adopt the policy and speak of it with an authority which naturally he did not himself possess. He hoped at any rate that when the Bill came up for Second Reading the Prime Minister would see his way to treat the matter, not as a Party question, but as a question of high politics, affecting the welfare of every man, woman, and child in the country. If the right hon. Gentleman would do that, he was quite sure that it would be supported by the great bulk of Members of the House. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide facilities for the sale of land to occupying tenants; and to extend the system of peasant proprietary in England and Wales."—(*Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

*MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester) said it was customary when introducing a Bill under the ten minutes rule to give the House some information as to the nature and scope of the measure. So far as the Labour Members were concerned they would do everything they could to solve the unemployed problem, put the people back on the land, empty the slums, and transfer the population from the city to the soil from which they ought never to have been divorced. He was not quite sure whether they could support this Bill or not. If the right hon. Gentleman had told them whether under his Bill the State was going to assist by providing funds for putting the machinery of the Bill into operation they would have been in a better position either to oppose or to acquiesce in its introduction. If the Bill proposed merely to re-establish peasant proprietors and yeoman farmers under the same economic conditions as they occupied before they were destroyed, his Party would oppose it. Any such proposal would be flying in the face of nature. The peasant proprietor and the yeoman farmer of the old conditions could not possibly fight against the great economic forces inimical to them which now existed. As they were exceedingly anxious that the House should face the very serious problem which the private property in land had presented to the country, they were inclined to offer opposition even to the introduction of the Bill. He did not think, however, that this was a case when the introduction of a Bill should be opposed. But if it was seen when the Bill was printed that it sought to re-establish a state of things which belonged to the historic past, they would, if any further stage were reached, offer it every opposition they could.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Herbert Roberts, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Colonel Lockwood, Sir Frederick Carne Rasch, Mr. Courthope, Sir Berkeley Sheffield, and Mr. Ernest Gardiner.

PURCHASE OF LAND (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

"To provide facilities for the sale of land to occupying tenants; and to extend the system of peasant proprietary in England and Wales," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 99.]

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATE, 1906-7.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for Additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army Services, viz.:—

	£
Vote 5. Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowance, &c.	439,000
„ 12. Miscellaneous Effective Services.	20,000
	459,000
Less Surpluses on other Votes	- 458,900
	100"

MR. HALDANE (Haddington) said the purpose of this token Vote for £100 was to obtain the authority of the Committee to the expenditure out of the surplus this year of £459,000, which was wanted for two purposes, the relief of certain of the Volunteer corps from financial liability, and the provision of compensation for those who had suffered damage from the Woolwich explosion. Taking first the last item, which was the smaller, the Committee knew that there occurred the other day a most unfortunate explosion at Woolwich whereby much damage was done. The Government were not actually liable for such damage, but they thought it right to provide compensation. They undertook to find a preliminary sum at once, and to make an estimate of the rest. The estimate had resulted in £15,000 required for Woolwich, and £5,000 for other places. The Committee would be in a better position to understand the source from which the larger sum of £439,000 came when it got the Appropriation Account. These sources were at present under the investigation of the Public Accounts Committee and would be included in the Appropriation Accounts. The need arose, no doubt, partly from the reductions in *personnel* made in the summer. They proposed to apply this sum in transferring to the War Office from the Public Works Loans Commissioners certain debts which were owed to them. Those debts had arisen in this way. Volunteer corps when they wanted to get a drill-hall borrowed a part of the money required. A careful inquiry was made as to the security, which was twofold—first the hall, and secondly the capitation grant which came to the corps. On those two assets a mortgage was granted by the Public Works Loans Commissioners. There were 200 or 300 of these mortgages, which were more or less paid off. The total not paid off was £439,000. If the units to which the halls belonged came into the new territorial second line it would be only right that they should relieve the corps of the responsibility of the debts. They did not propose to prejudge anything at this moment, as the corps might not come in, in which case they remained as they were. But, if they came in, it would be very inconvenient to put the additional large sum necessary on the Estimates when the time came, when no doubt there might be other things to provide for. Therefore, having a large surplus this year they thought it right to deal with a part of it in this fashion. The Committee might remember that in 1896 and 1897 the capitation grant was forestalled out of the surplus of the preceding year. He did not say that that was a precedent which ought to be extended, but there were occasions under which it seemed legitimate that these funds, representing savings out of the Estimates, should be used in that way. The money that had been spent, he might point out, was not money spent in aid of revenue account. They proposed to pay over the money to the Public Works Loans Commissioners and to ask them to stand as trustees of the debts. The debts would now belong to the War Office, but none the less there was a certain part of the debts for which the State had borrowed money which must be paid off in the ordinary course under this arrangement, exactly as they were being paid off at present. They had reduced the Estimates this year by an annual sum of £28,000, in view of this Estimate going through, that sum representing sinking fund and interest, which the War Office would now pay to themselves as the owners of the debt. That was the sum and substance of the proposal.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) said that with regard to the second part of the Estimate, the contribution in aid of those who suffered by the explosion at Woolwich, he had nothing to say, but that it was eminently a proper charge to ask Parliament to undertake, and that a Supplementary Estimate was the proper machinery. But to treat the whole of the sum involved as a Supplementary Estimate was really almost an abuse of words. It was not a Supplementary Estimate in the ordinary sense; it was a new Vote for an entirely new service, which was only necessary on the assumption that the great Army scheme expounded by the Secretary for War was going through. He observed that there were no representatives of the Treasury present.

MR. HALDANE said the matter had been carefully settled between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and himself, and had the full approval of the Treasury.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the right hon. Gentleman could not of course produce such an Estimate unless that were the case, but he complained none the less of the absence of the Treasury representatives when an Estimate of this remarkable character was presented. Still more, he thought they ought to be present when he called to mind the constant attacks upon Supplementary Estimates of any kind made by the Party opposite when they were in Opposition During the time he was Financial Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer there was no more constant complaint than that Supplementary Estimates for unnecessarily large sums were presented for services which it was said ought to have been provided for in the ordinary expenditure of the year. Unless he was much mistaken, the Financial Secretary to the War Office was one of the critics. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Education also had frequently insisted upon that view. Those Gentlemen were now in office. During the whole time he was connected with the Treasury there never was a Supplementary Estimate presented to the House for which there was so little justification as the one for which these purists in finance made themselves responsible the moment they came into office. Why was it? The Secretary of State for War had explained most ingenuously. He happened to have money. He asked Parliament to vote a certain number of men, then he reduced the number Parliament had voted, and having thus secured a considerable saving he said it was more convenient to him and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to spend it now than to have to produce it at the proper time when they knew what they were going to do with it, and when they could explain how it was going to be used. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he could hardly explain how he was to get the money, and he invited the Committee to discuss it when they had the Appropriation Accounts and the Report of the Public Accounts Committee. Would there be an opportunity this session for discussing the Report of that Committee? They had no opportunity last year, and he hoped that the invitation which the right hon. Gentleman had given meant that there would be an opportunity this year. What under ordinary circumstances happened was that such savings formed part of the realised surplus of the year, and as such would pass into the sinking fund, and could only be applied to the reduction of Debt. There was no subject on which right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite had waxed more eloqeunt than the magnitude of the Debt and the wickedness of turning away from its reduction sums that could be used for that purpose. In the earlier part of this session an hon. Gentleman below the gangway asked that a portion of the surplus should be devoted to old age pensions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the hon. Member was under an entire misapprehension as to the nature of the surplus, that it was sacred to the redemption of Debt, and that as long as he held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer he would not be a party to using any portion of it for any other purpose. Here they had about £500,000 of money taken away from the redemption of Debt. It would have been part of the realised surplus if the Secretary of State for War had not now pocketed it.

MR. HALDANE was understood to say that it did wipe away Debt.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said it did not. It was taken away from the redemption of Debt. It was seized by the right hon. Gentleman before it could get into the sinking fund, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a party to the transaction for a purpose which he would shortly explain. What the Chancellor of the Exchequer had refused stalwartly to do for the purpose of giving old-age pensions it was proposed to do for the purpose of relieving the Army Estimates in future years. The Secretary of State for War said, "We have the money, and it is more convenient to use it than to have to raise it at another time when it might cause us greater difficulty." The right hon. Gentleman had no occasion to raise it now. The real expenditure would only come in later years, and it was contingent on the carrying out of the scheme which had not yet been discussed in its many stages in this House. He stated that the sinking fund for that debt would continue to be paid hereafter as it had been hitherto, but that instead of paying it to the Public Works Loans Commissioners, he would pay it to himself. That being so the right hon. Gentleman could not say that this half million of money went to the redemption of Debt. If it was for the purpose of paying off the Public Works Loan Commissioners, let the Debt be wiped out once and for all. If there was money to pay off the Debt, a sinking fund, continuing over a term of years, was not needed. Let them pay it off and have done with it.

MR. HALDANE: Why?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that if they had the money available it was surely sounder finance, and more economical to pay off Debt than to keep it running, paying not only to a sinking fund but interest year by year. The right hon. Gentleman could not have it both ways. He could either redeem the Debt, in which case there would be no charge in future years, or he could keep the debt running as he proposed to do. What the right hon. Gentleman was doing was to redeem the Debt so far as the original lenders were concerned, and to take it himself in order that he might have an annuity of £27,000 a year in relief of War Office Estimates. That was bad finance. There was no justification for it, especially when the proposal came from right hon. and hon. Gentlemen on the Government Benches, remembering the language they had used when in Opposition and the language used the other day by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The transaction was doubly bad because of the form in which it was brought in. The Estimate was in fact for the carrying out of the right hon. Gentleman's new scheme for a

Territorial Army, and therefore it raised the whole question of the scheme of Army organisation. He did not propose to go into the whole of that scheme, but he wanted to take that opportunity, the earliest he had had, of entering a protest against a very important detail of it. When the Secretary of State for War was explaining the proposal in regard to county associations, to whom, he hoped, these buildings would eventually be transferred, he himself asked what would be the position of the great county boroughs like Birmingham, and the right hon. Gentleman was good enough to state that it was his intention to unite those county boroughs with the counties and put them under the county associations. He begged the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider that. He begged him to do so in the interest of his scheme. He ventured to say that in the case of Birmingham——

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the right hon. Gentleman can discuss this matter on the Supplementary Estimate.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the right hon. Gentleman had explained that he was taking over this debt from the Public Works Loans Commissioners in order later to be able to transfer it to the county associations which he proposed to create. The remarks he was making were therefore germane to that proposition.

MR. HALDANE said this proposition in no way involved the scheme. The money might or might not be applied to the purposes of the scheme.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said it was perfectly true that this transaction might stand by itself, but the right hon. Gentleman had himself explained that his reason for making the proposal was in order to be in a position to facilitate the transfer of these buildings to the county associations.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman can discuss on this Estimate the whole position of the county associations. There is nothing in the Estimate to show that they are involved, and the Secretary of State has told us that it does not involve them.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he accepted the ruling. It was impossible to discuss the Vote on its merits apart from the financial objection which he had raised. The Secretary of State was to be a sort of half-way house in which this fund was to find repose until it was transferred to a new purpose.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I have explained to the right hon. Gentleman that even admitting all that he has said, it would not raise the question of the constitution of the county associations.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he was placed in a great difficulty by the ruling. He was of course bound to accept it. It brought him into the position of saying that he could see no reason at all for the Vote. The Vote apparently was brought before the Committee in a form which made it impossible to discuss the object for which the money was to be applied.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I think I should remind the right hon. Gentleman that he can discuss the purpose for which the Vote is asked. The time to discuss the county associations will be, of course, on the Bill. This is not the right occasion for that.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he supposed that under this Vote the right hon. Gentleman would become mortgagee of the drill hall at Birmingham. What he said of that property would also apply to similar properties in other great county boroughs. He wished to know what the right hon. Gentleman was going to do with these halls after he became mortgagee. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would be well advised to consider the appointment of a special association for the borough itself as distinct from the county association. He thought that in doing so he would find the corporations not at all unsympathetic, as was shown by the fact that the Birmingham City Council lately voted £23,000 for the provision of a rifle range. He believed that the right hon. Gentleman would find better results if he used that Corporation feeling which was quite distinct from that of the county.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said that at first sight this sum of £439,000 appeared to be all right, but when they came to look into it closely he saw no advantage whatever in it to the Volunteer corps. The explanatory Memorandum which accompanied the Estimate said that the payment of interest on those loans was in no way affected by the change. The arrangement only affected eighty or ninety corps who had borrowed this £439,000 from the Public Works Loans Commissioners on the security of their freehold drill halls and the Capitation Grant. He did not wish to be offensive, but he thought that this was an enormous bribe to the Volunteers to accept the Territorial Army proposal. The right hon. Gentleman must not imagine that he was conferring the slightest good on the Volunteer corps in taking over this debt. For his part, if he had to borrow money he would rather owe it to the Public Works Loans Commissioners than to the War Office. The object of the War Office was to acquire the freeholds and leaseholds of the property of the Volunteer corps; but he believed that would be highly disadvantageous to the corps themselves. It was perfectly true that the Volunteer corps would not be a penny the worse. The Financial Secretary to the War Office in introducing the Vote said that no corps would be compelled to accept a transfer of their debt to the War Office against their will. If the right hon. Gentleman had come forward with a Supplementary Estimate for £439,000 to take over those debts and pay off the money—to make an absolute gift to the Volunteer corps—that would have been a great boon, although it would have been hard on those regiments which had been well administered, and had found the money to pay off their indebtedness instead of owing it to the Public Works Loans Commissioners.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said he wished to put a question to the right hon. Gentleman, the answer to which, he thought, would clear up the difficulty he had in understanding this Vote. He took the case of the London Irish Rifles. That corps had their headquarters near Charing Cross, in which were the officers' mess and other rooms for administration. They bought the freehold of that site in 1897 for £7,500, of which £4,500 was subscribed by the officers and their friends. The balance of £3,000 was borrowed from the Public Works Loans Commissioners, and was being paid off principal and interest at 3½ per cent. The corps was extremely popular, and their debt to the Public Works Loan Commissioners had been reduced to £2,100. What he wanted to know was whether the rights of the corps in their freehold would remain the same under the War Office as under the Public Works Loans Commissioners. At the present moment the site was vested in the names of two trustees—the commanding officer and the second in command. He believed that the corps could sell the site at a considerable profit and buy another in the suburbs.

MR. HALDANE: Absolutely and substantially the same. It is a transfer for the moment.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he did not wish to discuss the question whether the Volunteers would gain or lose by this proceeding. There was no one who had more insisted on the observance of the old Sinking Fund Act than the Financial Secretary to the War Office; but the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman was to render null and void that Act which provided that all unexpended balances should go to the reduction of Debt. If that almost immemorial practice were to be departed from it would open the door to all sorts of abuses, including the one which had arisen at the present moment. It was now 6th March and the financial year ended on 31st March. He gathered that the right hon. Gentleman had not so far infringed on the principles of finance as to spend this money. If that were so, why did not the right hon. Gentleman wait until he brought in his Army Estimates and put on them this additional amount which was to be spent in the year to come? The reason was that it would swell the Army Estimates; it would prevent the right hon. Gentleman saying: "I have reduced the Army Estimates;

see what a clever man I am." But in order to do that he had gone against all the traditions which applied to the old Sinking Fund, and had appropriated £500,000 which ought to have gone to the reduction of the National Debt. He was astonished that such an innovation should have been introduced by the Party who posed as economists and financial purists. He was glad to see present the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, because that right hon. Gentleman had a thorough knowledge of the subject, and he hoped that that right hon. Gentleman would get up and justify, if he could, his own colleagues in having taken £500,000 from his own Sinking Fund. The right hon. Gentleman considered that the reduction of the new Sinking Fund at the time of the Boer War, when this country was in a very awkward position, was wrong. But now, in a time of peace, when there was a surplus of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000, the Government proposed to devote £500,000 which ought to go to the reduction of Debt to paying off the debts on Volunteer drill halls. The right hon. Gentleman had said that it was not a payment of debt but merely a transfer from one page of the ledger to another; that the War Office received £27,000 a year instead of the Public Works Loans Commissioners. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman, in order to maintain the reputation of his Party, would wait for three weeks and add this item to his new Army Estimates. They must not forget the item when they saw the Army Estimates for next year, otherwise they would not know where they were. Perhaps he would not be justified in saying that this was a piece of jugglery, but at all events the sum would be taken out of the income for forthcoming years. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman knew exactly what he was saying when he gave his explanation of the scheme. It appeared to him that what it amounted to was that here was £500,000 flying around and the right hon. Gentleman did not see why he instead of the Chancellor of the Exchequer should not have it. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman, unless he could prove he was wrong, would withdraw the Estimate and bring up the question later in an amended form. He moved the reduction of the Vote by £50.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £50, be granted for the said Service."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

*MR. MORTON (Sutherland) said that no one would object to the £20,000 which was to go to compensate the people of Woolwich for loss caused by the explosion at the Arsenal, and therefore he would not discuss it, but he agreed in condemning the way in which this so-called Supplementary Estimate was brought before the Committee, and in saying that it was exceedingly objectionable. No doubt a similar course had been pursued on other occasions, and by the late Government many times. He did not think the late Government were any better than they ought to have been. But what they were asked to do was to vote £100, while really the sum of £458,900 was involved. Why should not the business of the nation be done in a businesslike manner? Why, if the Government wanted £458,900, should it not be put on the Paper instead of a Vote of £100? He quite agreed that the Volunteers were not to get any benefit from this Vote, which seemed to be the consequence of a sort of speculation by the War Office in buying up the debt which was due to the Public Works Loans Commissioners, and in themselves undertaking to collect the money and pay it off, because it was said in the memorandum that the Volunteers were to go on repaying the money, and whatever they paid next year would be put into account as an appropriation-in-aid. Therefore as far as any real business was concerned, there was nothing on the face of it involving any real expenditure. Why, therefore, should they trouble about it at all? Why should the War Department undertake the work, unless they had something up their sleeve? Why should they be troubled about that sum of money when they were told that it was a mere transfer which had no effect whatever? The principle which had been recognised by all Parties and Governments ought to be followed, and that was that all monies unexpended at the end of the year should go to the reduction of the National Debt. They were entitled to ask, therefore, that this £458,900 which had been unexpended should be devoted to that purpose. They had been specially told during the last year or two by experts that their great object should be to reduce the National Debt if they wanted to get the finances of the country into a proper condition, although the Party now in power were not responsible for the way in which that debt was accumulated, or for the way in which the money was squandered by the late Government. He did not accuse his right hon. friend the Secretary for War or anyone else of doing anything wrong, but he did think that the right hon. Gentleman had been misled by someone at the War Office, and that, in spite of his experience in other places, he had been entrapped into using his position and the great authority he had in the House to do something which in other moments he would be the last man to do. He did not want in any way to hurt his right hon. friend's dignity, because that was a great thing with those who reached the front Government Bench—they all thought of their dignity and importance—but as a Member of the Liberal Party, he wished to see the national finances in a better position than they now were. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would withdraw this Vote and allow the £458,900 to go in reduction of the National Debt. He was sure that if he did so the right hon. Gentleman would find in the long run that his character as a War Minister and as a leading Member of the Liberal Party would be better established than it would be by carrying out the proposal now before the Committee.

MR. HALDANE said that as his conduct had been called into question he thought he ought to reply. This was merely a book-keeping transaction which did not make one farthing difference. The money which the Volunteer corps paid for this purpose came out of the capitation grant, and £28,000 was given to the Commissioners to pay off principal and interest. In the ordinary course the Sinking Fund would have provided for the capital expenditure, but under this proposal the debt would be reduced to exactly the same extent by the annuity of £28,000 a year which they had to pay instead of putting down the capital sum in a lump. Financially they redeemed the annuity and the annuity was in substance the same as the debt. There was no difference at all.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN inquired whether the £28,000 a year which had hitherto been paid to the Public Works Loans Commissioners was in fact the money of the Volunteers. It was part of the capitation grant given to the Volunteers, but intercepted as regarded the £28,000 to pay off the debt. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean to pay the Volunteers less in future by the amount of £28,000?

MR. HALDANE replied in the negative. The Volunteers never got that £28,000. It was intercepted for the purpose of paying their debt to the Public Works Loans Commissioners.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN wished to know what would happen when a corps had cleared its debt off. It would previously have entered into the possession of its full capitation grant, but what would happen now?

MR. HALDANE said exactly the same state of things which prevailed now would go in. When the debt was cleared off the Volunteer corps would come into its full capitation grant. It would be under this arrangement mortgaged to him, and he would be the mortgagee in possession. They would under this scheme lose not a sixpence of public money. The £28,000 was in his hands paying off debt precisely as it had done before, and that was why he had called it merely a book-keeping transaction.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said it appeared that in the past this money had been handed over to the Chancellor of the Exchequer who had used it for the extinction of Debt, but the Secretary for War now proposed to keep the money in his own hands and was going to speculate with it. He had a great respect for the right hon. Gentleman as a man who understood military matters and as a man engaged in another profession, but he had never heard of him as a financial speculator in mortages. Was it a business-like position to put up the War Minister to make investments? Surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the proper person to have control of this £500,000, and it was a most dangerous plan to place it in the hands of the Minister for War. It was not for the Admiralty or the War Office to go off speculating upon their own hook; the matter should be dealt with by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*Mr. GEORGE FABER (York) said that, although he would not have the audacity to suggest that the Secretary for War was going in for speculation, he contended that he was doing by these transactions what he had no right to do. It was a culpable evasion, if it was not an actual breach, of the old Sinking Fund Act which provided that all surpluses at the end of the financial year should be handed over to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt. The Secretary for War was deliberately depriving the Sinking Fund of a sum of nearly £500,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the custodian of the nation's funds, was not present to look after his own. He (Mr. Faber) asked whether it was fair that the Secretary for War should filch away such a sum in this manner. The country had heard over and over again almost *ad nauseam* from hon. Members who were now in power that the national finances were in a deplorable condition, and that the National Debt had become so swollen that the national credit was impaired. That was from some aspects true. It was therefore the duty of the Liberal Party when they came into power to put the national finances on a proper basis; and their first step ought to have been to reduce the National Debt. So far as the sum required was concerned he had no word to say about it, but he did say that if the War Office wanted the sum of £459,000, let them come to the House next year and ask for it in the ordinary course by putting it on the Estimates. He would be the last man to suggest that the War Secretary had done this in order that he might make the Estimates of next year lower. It would be impossible for him to do anything of that kind. He would not suggest that the right hon. Gentleman wished to take in the Committee in any sense of the word. What he did believe was that the War Secretary in his new-born enthusiasm to do the best he could had hardly thought out what he was doing. Now that it had been clearly pointed out that it was an infringement of the old Sinking Fund Act, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider his decision.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.) thought the debate could not be brought to a proper conclusion until the Committee had had a full explanation from the person actually responsible for this operation, namely, the Financial Secretary. No one in the last Parliament had devoted so much energy to placing the financial position of the country before the House, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would give a full and complete explanation of this transaction. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had taken as a precedent for this operation a case where a Supplementary Estimate was taken for the Volunteer Capitation Grant. But in his opinion there was no analogy between the two cases.

Mr. HALDANE said in that case the money was taken out of a surplus and out of the Estimates in the next year.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH said the operation only resulted in the Volunteers getting in two sums what they otherwise would have received later in one. In that case it was necessary to enable the Volunteers to get the money at a time more convenient to them. The question of urgency had been raised. It was perfectly possible that it was part of the right hon. Gentleman's new scheme, but if it was, no suggestion of it had been put before the House by the right hon. Gentleman when he put forward his scheme a few days previously. The right hon. Gentleman had to show something more than a justification for his policy; he had to show that there was urgency in the matter. His right hon. friend had said that the Secretary of State could make this right in three weeks by bringing in another Estimate. He would go further and say the right hon. Gentleman could put it right to-morrow by withdrawing the present Estimate and issuing a revised one. Therefore there was no weight whatever in the plea of urgency. It was a new service, and it was not contemplated in the Estimates of last year. And as the expenditure would not come on until 1907–8 he would have thought it quite possible to substitute a revised Estimate. This transaction would not, he understood, be concluded by the simple financial operation. This operation applied only to those mortgages which related to loans which were fully advanced, and not apparently to those which were not fully advanced. Was the House to understand that any benefit that might accrue to those corps which would come in under this operation would not be extended to other corps whose loans had not been fully paid up, or was a principle being established that the loans made by the Public Works Loans Commissioners were to be taken over by the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. HALDANE said there were only two or three—a very small amount—which had not been fully paid up, and they would be dealt with afterwards.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH said he would like to press the right hon. Gentleman still further on the principle and ask whether in the future the Volunteers were to go to the Public Works Loans Commissioners or to the right hon. Gentleman?

Mr. HALDANE said they would go to the Public Works Loans Commissioners as before.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH said in those circumstances he did not see the object of this alteration. He reminded the Committee that the Public Works Loans Commissioners were established largely for the purpose of having a purely independent body which was not liable to anything like Parliamentary pressure. He asked whether it was not possible to take a favourable view of the position of Volunteers in the difficulties they had to encounter, by decreasing the interest if they were not able to remit the debt. It seemed to him that no precise benefit was to be obtained by Volunteer corps from the proposal, and he did not think the right hon. Gentleman had made clear what its real objects were. They were now within three or four weeks of the end of the financial year, with new Estimates and the introduction of a new service, and in those circumstances he thought the right hon. Gentleman would be well advised—it would make no difference in the details of his policy—if he presented a revised estimate to the House of Commons, showing what his policy really was.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.) was understood to say that while he wished to reply briefly to the right hon. Gentleman, he did not think he could add anything to what his right hon. friend had said. As a matter of fact by the operation proposed the public liabilities of the State would be diminished. He did not think that there was any doubt in the minds of hon. Members as to what was meant by the proposal, and the right hon. Gentleman the other night had made no secret of the fact that it was brought forward with a view to his scheme of Army reorganisation which he had already explained. But supposing his scheme did not go through, the position of the Volunteer corps would be absolutely unchanged. All they would do would be simply to continue paying interest and sinking fund to the War Office instead of to the Public Works Loans Commissioners.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked whether, apart from the scheme, there was any advantage either to the War Office or to the Volunteers of the country.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he did not say that there would be any advantage to the War Office if the scheme did not go through, but, as the right hon. Gentleman was aware there was in view of the scheme, if it did go through, considerable advantage to the War Office, and still more to the Volunteers, and he ventured to think that the Volunteer corps as a rule would not be inclined to demur to the proposal of his right hon. friend. No doubt there was very great ultimate benefit in store for them if the House adopted the Supplementary Estimate and the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. If the House in its wisdom should see fit not to accept the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman then they were as they had been before; no possible alteration was made in the future, and Volunteer corps would find as heretofore, that if they wanted money for building drill halls or laying out ranges, they would get it on similar terms to those they were now receiving from the Public Works Loans Commissioners. The right hon. Gentleman the night before last and on other occasions had explained very fully what he proposed to do in the event of his scheme passing. He proposed to remit the debts due to the Public Works Loans Commissioners in order to start the Territorial Army of the future in a much better and more independent position than the Volunteer corps now occupied. Therefore he thought the Volunteer corps of the country would be very slow indeed to refuse the proposals now being made by his right hon. friend.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge Universiy) said that, assuming the projected scheme did not go through, the War Office were investing a sum of money, nearly £500,000, which should naturally go to the liquidation of the National Debt. They were investing that sum of money in a terminable annuity, and for a number of years the War Office would get £28,000 annually which was not passed by any Vote of the House of Commons. He had the greatest sympathy with the proposal, but it was wrong from the financial point of view; as had been pointed out, it was being dealt with contrary to the ordinary rules of the Constitution. Assuming that the scheme did go through, then, as he understood, there would be no further capitation grant at all from which this annual payment was to come. At the present moment they knew that £28,000 came from the capitation grant. If the scheme went through the capitation grant would come to an end, and, therefore, this investment of it would have no interest and no sinking fund. Consequently, the benefit to the right hon. Gentleman when he brought in his scheme a fortnight or three weeks hence—assuming that he abolished the capitation grant and other matters—was that he would be enabled to say that he had carried the scheme through, and that it would only cost so much—say £500,000 less than it would cost if this Vote was not carried that night. The benefit which the Volunteer corps got was a little different from what the right hon. Gentleman had told them. When the hon. Member for Sheffield spoke, the Secretary for War frankly said that he did not suggest that the Volunteer corps were going to get any benefit from the Vote at all, whereas the Financial Secretary to the War Office had said that if only they gave the Government the £500,000 that night, and if they would only wait, the Volunteers would find that the proposal would suit them very well indeed. Was it not perfectly clear that the benefit the Volunteers would get was that they might be relieved of certain personal liability in the payment of these debts on drill halls? If that were so, he would support it most strongly, but at the proper time, namely, when the scheme was brought in abolishing the capitation grant. Then, if they thought fit to say that £500,000 should be voted for the purpose of relieving the Volunteers of liability, or redeeming the debts, he at least would not be likely to oppose it.

MR. ABEL SMITH (Hertfordshire, Hertford) thought this financial operation had been pretty well exposed. Nothing that the Secretary for War or the Financial Secretary had said could possibly conceal the fact that a sum of £500,000 was being diverted from its proper purpose, namely, the reduction of the National Debt, to other purposes—a proceeding which it had always been contended, especially by the right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who now occupied the Treasury Bench, was an improper one. He wished to consider what effect the transaction would have upon the Volunteer Force. It was possible that the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman might not go through during the present year. In that case the Volunteer corps would remain in the same position that they occupied now, and the change effected would be that, instead of the Public Works Loans Commissioners, the War Office would be the mortgagees of these drill-halls. That would give the War Department a pull over the Volunteer corps which it had not had before, and they all knew that the Auxiliary Forces were in a very difficult position with regard to the action which the authorities at the War Office took in reference to them. On the other hand, if the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman became law, the capitation grant to Volunteers would cease. Who would then be the owner of these halls? Would the War Office become the owners or would the new corps which were to be formed out of the new Territorial Army be the owners? Would they have full control over them, as the trustees in connection with the Volunteer corps had over the drill-halls at the present time? He for one would like to have some further explanation. He thought the protest which had been made against this transaction had been fully justified.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN desired to say a few words in reply to the financial argument used by the hon. Gentleman. He took exception to the statement that by the process suggested they were paying off Debt. But for this proposal the £430,000 would go at the end of the year to the National Debt Commissioners and would be applied to the reduction of Debt. The Secretary for War admitted that he intercepted this sum, but he claimed that he equally applied it to the reduction of Debt because he redeemed an annuity. He would take the two contingencies of the Army scheme going through and not going through. Whether the scheme went through or not the right hon. Gentleman did not succeed in reducing the Debt by withdrawing this sum. In case his scheme did not go through a certain amount of the capitation grant due to the War Office which had been intercepted would be intercepted for his own repayment. That, in the course of the number of years the loan had to run, would extinguish the debt, just as, if he had done nothing, it would have extinguished the debt in the hands of the Public Works Loan Commissioners. At the end of the currency of those loans what would be the right hon. Gentleman's position if the Volunteers were continued on the basis which now existed? He would have wiped out a debt it was true, but it was a debt someone owed to him, and his obligation would be to pay not the capitation grant less their charge for the Sinking Fund and interest, but the whole of the capitation grant. It would be the debt of the Volunteers that was wiped out and not the debt of the nation, and the annual obligation of the nation would be exactly the same. He noticed that the right hon. Gentleman shook his head, but he would be extremely interested to hear how he met that argument. If the new scheme went through what would happen? The Financial Secretary to the War Office had explained that it was the object of the Secretary of State for War in becoming the mortgagee of these debts to be able to remit them in connection with his new organisation. That got rid of the debt, but whose debt? It was the debt of the Volunteers, but not the debt of the nation, for that remained exactly where it was when the right hon. Gentleman began his operations. On either hypothesis, whether the scheme went through or not, the right hon. Gentleman was delaying the reduction of Debt to the tune of £450,000, and that was a thing which ought not to be done except under special conditions of urgency or for very special reasons which did not exist in this case. It was being done by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite, who had so persistently attacked the late Government for sins which were not comparable in magnitude with this.

MR. HALDANE said he had appreciated the admirable and ingenious argument of the right hon. Gentleman. He would put the matter to the Committee in a manner in which it would be clear as light. The right hon. Gentlemen had said that if things were left to their normal course this £459,000 would go in payment of debt. He wished to point out that they handed over this money to the Public Works Loans Commissioners, and they applied it to the extinction of the public debt just in the same fashion as the Treasury would have done. It was simply done by another process and the same amount of debt was extinguished.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the Secretary of State for War's fallacy was in supposing that he was redeeming a debt which he had to pay, whereas it was a debt which somebody else had to pay. It was the debt of the Volunteers, and he only came into it because, having money due to the Volunteers in his possession, instead of paying the money to the Volunteers and then letting the Volunteers pay it back to the National Debt Commissioners, it was a simpler transaction that he should pay it to the Public Works Loans Commissioners. He wished to point out that the debt he was redeeming was not a debt of the State at all.

MR. HALDANE said the Volunteers incurred this debt for a public purpose, and it was only being transferred from one authority to another. Under the Volunteer Act the property of the Volunteers was vested in his own corporate capacity and he was liable.

SIR F. BANBURY said the right hon. Gentleman had told them that they had made a mistake, because he was going to pay this £459,000 to the Public Works Loans Commissioners, who would apply it to the reduction of the National Debt. Under ordinary circumstances the £459,000, being a surplus, would be handed to the National Debt Commissioners, and would be applied to the reduction of Debt, and the Public Works Loans Commissioners would still have £459,000 owing them by the Volunteers. They would receive in payment of that so much for interest, and so much for Sinking Fund, and the Sinking Fund would eventually redeem it, and that would be applied to the reduction of Debt. In that case there would be twice £459,000 applied to reduction of Debt, but under the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman only one £459,000 would be applied whilst the remainder would go into the pockets of the War Office and would be lost to the National Debt.

MR. ASHLEY asked if the sum mentioned included the drill halls vested in the names of the two trustees, the purchase of which halls might have been by made money provided by friends of the corps.

MR. HALDANE said that all depended upon the character of the trusts. In cases where corps ceased to exist the property would be transferred to the Secretary of State for War, but any trust property would not be effected.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) said that where a corps lost its identity there might be cases where money had been acquired to purchase drill halls and ranges for that particular corps, and those who had provided the money might be unwilling to hand over those halls and ranges. He instanced the case of the London Scottish, who had their own history and distinct identity. Would the right hon. Gentleman use this money to take over the debt of a corps like that? If not, how was he going to deal with the various Volunteer forces under his territorial scheme? This was a matter of considerable importance. The right hon. Gentleman would take over the debt now due to the Public Works Loans Commissioners, and in the meantime he would pay the interest out of the capitation grant. One of the purposes in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman was to abolish that grant. Therefore the fund to meet the interest would disappear. Did he mean to leave the debt as a burden hanging round the necks of the officers who had guaranteed the payment of the interest on these loans? If not, was he going far to force officers into the acceptance of his scheme? It seemed like a form of coercion. He thought the right hon. Gentleman should state that he intended to pay the debt on all these halls irrespective of whether the Volunteer corps joined the Territorial Army or not. Otherwise he would be placing in a very awkward position officers who by their exertions had secured valuable drill halls and ranges in different parts of the country when he said, "Your corps is going to be transferred to the 71st Battalion of the Territorial Army, and we desire you to hand over all that you have got, and if you don't do so we will make you responsible for the sums incurred as debt on your drill hall, which will be valueless for any other purpose." He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would relieve the Volunteer corps of the debt.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he understood the explanation to amount to this. The money would normally have been used for paying off a portion of the National Debt. Instead of that the right hon. Gentleman invested it in certain mortgages. That was quite *bona-fide*. He wished to know whether the nation would get as good interest then as was paid to the Public Works Loans Commissioners.

Mr. HALDANE said the effect would be precisely the same. It was not the intention of the Government to use any sort of compulsion. There were provisions in the Bill which dealt with this matter, and he would explain them when they got into Committee on the Bill.

Sir J. RANDLES (Cumberland, Cockermouth) asked what would happen in a case where the members of a corps had borrowed money for the purpose of a drill hall and had issued debentures on the hall. Would the War Office relieve both the corps and the debenture holders by taking over the property? If they did not, those who provided the hall might be badly left.

Mr. HALDANE said that naturally that was a matter which had not escaped notice. Probably they would do something in future, but he could not say at the present stage how the matter would have to be dealt with. It was outside of anything in this Estimate.

Sir F. BANBURY asked whether he might assume that the Financial Secretary had admitted the statement he had made.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 88; Noes, 299. (Division List No. 37.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood,RtHn.Sir Alex.F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hn. Sir H.
Balfour,Rt.Hn. A. J.(CityLond
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (Hornsey)
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Hon. Guy (Winchester
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arnold
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt.Hn.Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,RtHn.J.A. (Worc
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H.A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim.S.
Craig,CaptainJames (Down,E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robt. (Lanark,Govan
Fell, Arthur
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Haddock, George R.
Hambro, Charles Eric
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hervey,F.W.F.(Bury S. Edm'ds
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kenyon-Slaney,Rt.Hon.Col. W
Lockwood,Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col. A.R.
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin,S)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm.G. (Petersfield)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts,S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Rothschild, Hon. LionelWalter
Sheffield,SirBerkeley GeorgeD.
Smith,Abel H.(Hertford,East)
Stanley,Hon.Arthur (Ormskirk
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson,W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Col.Sir C.E. Howard
Walker,Col.W.H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,A.Stanley (York,E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B.Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Faber.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork,N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Aldne, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Jn. Emmott(Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Benn,W.(T'w'rHamlets,S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Billson, Alfred
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner,J.F.L. (Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSir J.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Buxton, Rt.Hn.SydneyCharles
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.Richard Knig't
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clarke, C. Goddard
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Coats,Sir T.Glen-(Renfrew,W.)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett,CH (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickson-Poynder,Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Donelan, Captain A.

Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert Jn.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E.(Derbyshire,N. E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Helme, Norval Watson
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hooper, A. G.
Hope,W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jordan, Jeremiah
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain

King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Kitson, Rt. Hon. Sir James
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk Bg'hs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northunts)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow W.
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Palmer, Sir Charles Mark
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps,Col.Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinburgh,Central
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)

Pullar, Sir Robert
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Renton, Major Leslie
RichardsThomas (W.Monm'th)
Richards, T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson,SirG.Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott,A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Major J. B.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor,Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philip
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds, S.)
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wilkie, Alexander
Williamson, A.
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Young, Samuel
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that there was an amount of £20,000 in this Vote for compensation in connection with the explosion at Woolwich Arsenal. Could the right hon. Gentleman give the Committee any information as to the cause of that accident, and did he intend to lay Papers on the Table of the House regarding it? He expressed the hope that the right hon. Gentleman would go into the question of the danger of the buildings at Woolwich and the danger of the work which was carried on in them. He heard a little about these matters from various sources sometime ago, and he was considerably alarmed at the state of things that existed, but which he thought had been considerably remedied since. Of course he was very much shocked that an explosion of this kind should have taken place, but was thankful that it had involved no loss of life. The right hon. Gentleman had devoted great attention to the subject of explosives, and he thought that he should consult with private firms who manufactured explosives and who entertained the impression that the precautions taken in the Government factories were either insufficient, or disregarded, or were not as successful as they should be in the way of preventing explosions.

MR. HALDANE said that they did not know what the causes of the explosion were. They knew that there was nitro-glycerine in the building, but there were many other things there of which they knew nothing at present. There were many explosives of a dangerous nature, such, for instance, as cordite, which altered their character under varying conditions of temperature. We had brought home from abroad small quantities of those dangerous substances which had stood the heat test; but whether the explosion was due to carelessness or whether it was inevitable they had not yet determined. But he had appointed the best expert Committee which he could get together, and it was conducting an exhaustive investigation into the whole subject. That was all that he could say at present, but he would be able to give further information later on. It was probable that several of the things which had been put into the building were the cause of the explosion, but probably not blasting gelatine, otherwise fragments of blasting gelatine would not have been found. He really doubted very much whether the Committee which had been appointed would be able to get any clear idea of the cause of the explosion.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked if the right hon. Gentleman could give the Committee any information as to the character of the building in which the explosion took place? Was it a modern light building?

Mr. HALDANE said it was a light building. Whether there was or was not a larger quantity of dangerous stuff stored in it than usual he could not tell. They would know later on. But they certainly had stuff there which had come from abroad. It might be said that, ordinarily speaking, the building was used only for experimental purposes and therefore it was of light structure.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said that the right hon. Gentleman had stated that cordite changed its nature in hot climates; but he thought that very extensive experiments had been conducted which showed that one of its merits was that it did not change its nature in hot climates. Did he understand the right hon. Gentleman to suggest that there was in the building a certain amount of cordite in a state of decomposition which made it dangerous and liable to explode? If so, that was a very serious state of things. Was it quite true to state that because fragments of blasting gelatine were found undetonated, all the blasting gelatine did not detonate?

Mr. HALDANE said that in regard to the blasting gelatine, if it was in such a condition that it would all readily detonate, then it must have been in an abnormal condition. Generally speaking, cordite stood the changes of climate very well, but every now and then indications were found—which applied to all other chemical explosives—that it underwent changes under certain conditions, for instance, when those explosives were stored near engine boilers or were exposed to a tropical sun; and they had to be constantly subjected to the heat test to see whether they were exuding nitric acid. On the other hand they underwent changes in their character of a much more dangerous character in a cold climate. The cold contracted the slight fibres which contained the minute globules of nitro-glycerine and these got forced out. The Department had been always watching those things, and had brought from abroad a certain quantity of these explosives for the purpose of making investigation into their nature. While that investigation was in progress it was not possible for him to give an answer to the hon. Gentleman's inquiries with any certainty.

Mr. MORTON asked whether the amount of £20,000 in the Vote for compensation would cover all the claims that had been lodged, and whether it was a fact that the Woolwich Arsenal authorities refused the assistance of the local fire brigade on the occasion of the explosion because they had not been properly introduced?

Mr. HALDANE said that the explosion took place in the dead of night, and he doubted very much whether the fire brigade, if it had been summoned, could have done any good. As regarded the amount of compensation, the Mayor and the hon. Member for Woolwich with one or two responsible people in the locality were appointed a committee to go into the details, and that committee thought that £15,000 would be enough. To that sum the War Office had added £5,000 for compensation to people outside the Woolwich Corporation jurisdiction. £20,000, he thought, was a very liberal estimate.

Viscount HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said he supposed that this £20,000 of compensation was given out of the goodness of heart of the War Office and that it was not a legal liability. If that was the case, was it not likely to form a precedent which would be followed in other cases? Would it not be possible for the Government to do something in the way of insuring against such accidents? If so, it might result in considerable economy.

Mr. HALDANE said he was afraid that the argument of the noble Lord was based on a fallacy. Insurance was not a cheap but always a dear thing. The premiums paid went to the profit of the insurance companies, and the average insurer paid more than the benefits he received. The justification was that their own fortune was small compared with the damage which might come to it. But in the case of the Government which had large resources it was better for them not to insure. In fact it was strict economy. Of course the Government had made no admission as to legal liability for compensation; it would have been wrong to do so. But they had thought it right to offer this compensation as if they had been liable.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY REPORT [26th February].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1906-7.

Class V.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £32,470, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in-Aid.

Class VII.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries."

SUPPLY [26th February] REPORT.

First Resolution read a second time.

*Mr. ASHLEY said they were asked in this Vote to grant a sum of £4,070 as a grant in aid of the flax industry in St. Helena. They had had an interesting statement from the Under-Secretary as to what was being done to enable St. Helena to pay her way in future, and he was not anxious to oppose the grant, but he thought that there was one question which required clearing up, and that was whether we should not have to increase the grant in future. In Committee he had stated that the necessity for the Vote had arisen owing to the withdrawal of the garrison from the island, which had necessitated the formation of a new policy by His Majesty's Government. He had said that the number of men forming that garrison was 100 and that their cost to this country was between £10,000 and £12,000. The Under-Secretary said, however, that the garrison consisted of 250 men, and that the saving to the nation in consequence of their withdrawal was something like £30,000 or £40,000. For himself he had founded his speech on a statement made by the Secretary of State for War last March when he introduced his Army Estimates. In the course of that speech the Secretary of State said that he found that the Island of St. Helena had a garrison of 100 men costing £10,000 or £12,000 a year. Therefore, according to the Secretary of State the saving was not between £30,000 or £40,000, as the Under-Secretary had stated, but only between £10,000 and £12,000. Before they voted this £4,070 he thought they ought to know whether these 100 or 250 men were still in existence or were they included in the 20,000 men who had been disbanded, because if they had not been disbanded the nation had still to pay for them. If we had to pay this £4,070 and also for a force which was still in existence it would be better to leave the men at St. Helena and allow the island to go on normally as before, instead of starting a new industry which in future would probably have to be assisted by fresh grants-in-aid. He thought that some information was necessary in order to enable the House to decide whether the Vote should be withheld or whether an increased Vote would be necessary. He thought that, if in regard to our Colonies and dependencies we blew hot and cold upon them, when we blew cold we ought to see that they were not left in a state of starvation. As far as the flax industry was concerned, it seemed to him a little doubtful whether its cultivation would be a success. In Ireland the area in which flax was cultivated in 1874 was 106,000 acres, but in 1902 it had fallen to 50,000, and the year before last it amounted to only 46,000; that was to say, it had diminished by more than one half. If in a country where the crops were so near the mills where the flax was prepared the area devoted to its cultivation had decreased by one half in so short a time, it seemed to him that it would be impossible for the islanders of St. Helena to make a living out of flax. The Government were going to bring an expert from New Zealand to help the islanders in regard to this cultivation. But they were only going to pay £400 a year for the expert, and he did not think that for that sum much of an expert would be obtained, especially when it was considered that the man was to be brought from New Zealand and "dumped down" in St. Helena. He doubted whether the Government were helping the islanders by their policy, and although he did not wish to oppose the Vote, he thought they were indulging in a risky experiment and did not know what they were undertaking.

*Mr. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) also wished to say a few words upon this Resolution, not because he objected to the introduction of the flax industry, but because he had his doubts as to whether the Government had been right in deciding to withdraw the garrison from St. Helena, a step which had led to great distress. For many years there had been a garrison at St. Helena, and in consequence of their presence a trade had grown up in the various commodities on which the soldiers spent their pay. In consequence of the withdrawal of the troops, however, that trade had disappeared. Last year the Secretary of State for War stated that £35,000 would be saved by withdrawing the garrison, which then numbered, he thought, 180 men. That was a considerable amount, and if the sum which was now under discussion was to be granted out of the Exchequer, he thought it ought to be taken into consideration. He would like to ask the Under-Secretary for the Colonies why the withdrawal of the garrison was ordered? Was it done on the advice of the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty, or upon the advice of the Chief of the Staff of the Army Council, or was it done simply on the authority of the War Office itself.

*Mr. SPEAKER did not see how the Under-Secretary for the Colonies could answer those questions, nor did he think them relevent to the particular Resolution before the House. The question to which the hon. Member alluded must be raised on some other Vote.

*Mr. HICKS BEACH said he would not pursue the question further, except to say that he thought the Under-Secretary for the Colonies was in possession of all the information about the withdrawal of the troops. It was said that the Government would save money by that withdrawal, but he submitted that if in time of war a garrison had to be sent out that would not be so.

*Mr. SPEAKER pointed out that there was no question of war in this case. It was only a question of the flax industry and of the grant in aid of it.

*Mr. HICKS BEACH said he was sorry to transgress so often, but he merely wished to point out that the grant-in-aid was brought about by the withdrawal of the garrison. He thought that if the island was to be made use of in time of war it would be more economical to keep the garrison at St. Helena and maintain the fortifications than to give a grant-in-aid of the flax industry. He would not, however, refer to that subject any further, but he desired to allude to the grant of £4,070 for starting this new industry. He wished to know whether the Colonial Office proposed to send out immediately any grant for the purpose of alleviating the present distress. Numbers of people were out of work; bridges and roads were falling into disrepair because there was no money to spend on them. And as to the grant itself, was the Colonial Government in St. Helena to be responsible for the spending of the money? Was it a free gift, or was there to be an obligation on the Colonial Government to return it at some future time, or to pay a certain sum per annum as interest to the Imperial Government? He believed that flax had been grown for many years in the island,

and the attempt had been made to convert it into fibre; but owing to the machinery being indifferent and placed in the wrong situation, the enterprise had not been a success. With regard to the item of £400 for a flax expert who was to be brought from New Zealand, he had no experience of wages in New Zealand, but he should say that that was quite an adequate sum to pay for one year. At the present moment the cattle owners of St. Helena owned some 1,200 head of stock, and having regard to the fact that they were encouraged by the Government to increase their stock in order that the island might be self-supporting in time of war, he thought they should receive some compensation from the Government now that their market for the stock had disappeared. They had spent a considerable sum in increasing their stock, and the result of the withdrawal of the garrison was that they were left with that stock, which they could not sell in the island and which they could not export owing to the heavy freights. The property owners of Jamestown also had been put to considerable expense in connection with a scheme of drainage which they did not think necessary, but which was undertaken at the instance of the Royal Engineers because the Government were preparing to build new barracks in the town. The troops were now withdrawn and the barracks had not been built, and it was rather hard that those property owners should be called upon to expend money upon an improvement they did not require. He thought they were entitled to some consideration from the Government in that regard. He thanked the Government for the grant they were making to St. Helena, and hoped that he would receive an answer from the hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary to the questions he had put to him.

*MR. MORTON regretted that he had to occupy the attention of the House on this occasion, but owing to the Vote having been closured in Committee no opportunity had been given to discuss these particular items. His main objection to some of them was that although they might be useful for their present purposes he thought they might be much better spent on our own people in our own country. He referred particularly to Sutherlandshire. Chinese repatriation had been so frequently discussed that it was not necessary to deal with it to-night, but he certainly did object to the term Chinese coolies appearing in the Papers of the House instead of the proper term, which was Chinese slavery. At the time of the general election it was called Chinese slavery, and he believed it was Chinese slavery still, and the worst form of slavery known, being slavery for the making of money, and it was the sort of slavery described by Wesley as "The Sum of all Villainy." He had had no explanation from the Government as to why they had altered the name. Then there was the grant for the Imperial Institute, an entirely new item. Nobody knew how that money was going to be spent. But he knew how that body had wasted the hundreds and thousands of pounds which had been given to them during the last twenty years. It was time they stopped those grants to an Institute which did no useful work, but spent the money on salaries and getting titles. He noticed that the Estimate was £1,400, and that if it was passed the Imperial Institute was to have the money for three years, so that the sum they would get would be £4,200 not £1,400 only. On the previous occasion they had not the opportunity of asking the Under-Secretary for the Colonies to explain the Vote, and consequently the hon. Gentleman had not explained it. He did not believe the hon. Gentleman could, but still they were entitled to hear him try to do so and to endeavour to give them some information as to what was going to be done with the money. There was another matter he should like to see inquired into. In 1887, some £30,000 was collected in the City for the purpose of erecting a building within the City, and to be used for Colonial trade purposes. The money was ear-marked and left in trust for that object. The adventurers got the money somehow and spent it in salaries, etc. A trust should be sacred. When was that trust money to be returned? With all the charges on this country and the claims upon it for old age pensions and other things, including the repayment of debt, the House was asked to give £4,500 to a set of adventurers who were only looking out for titles when he himself wanted the money for real *bona fide* objects in Sutherlandshire. The best way which hon. Members could occupy their time was in criticising the money Votes, and it was their duty to take care that British money was not wasted. He trusted the Government would bear in mind not only their own pledges but the pledges given by the Liberal Party at the general election to economise and they should resist the attempts of that sort of people who came claiming thousands for no useful purpose. He trusted also that the hon. Gentleman would tell the House who constituted the Imperial Institute and what claim they had to any of the money of the taxpayers of the country.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said he desired to ask the Under-Secretary for the Colonies what was the justification he had to offer for presenting these Estimates, which were small ones, as Supplementary Estimates at all. Why should they be presented as Supplementary Estimates rather than as ordinary Estimates for next year? The £32,000 which they were now asked to vote would go in the ordinary course to the reduction of the National Debt. He thought the hon. Gentleman and the House would agree that the present state of National Debt was a far more important matter, generally speaking, to which the money should be applied, than anyone of the four purposes with which they were now dealing. He submitted that it was only justifiable to divert such money from the reduction of Debt if some really grave emergency could be shown. He had looked over the items, and although they might be perfectly proper, so far as he was able to judge, he did not see any great urgency or exigency such as alone would justify the diversion of money from the reduction of the National Debt. For instance, in regard to the small grant to St. Helena, if they could not find the money, was it really impossible to wait three weeks, for that was all it meant, until they could put the grant into the ordinary Estimates, and so avoid the diversion of this sum from the National Debt? He saw that two of the grants were to be subject to audit. The grant to St. Helena was to be subject to the audit of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, but no surrender of any unexpended balance was to be made to the Exchequer. In those circumstances, he did not in the least understand what useful purpose would be served by an audit, which was to ensure that the money had been spent in accordance with the order of the House, and that any balance left was to be surrendered to the Exchequer. If the money was to be handed over to St. Helena straight away, and not a farthing was to come back in the ordinary financial course, an audit was perfectly useless. It mattered nothing to the House whether the Government of St. Helena had spent the money on flax, rum, tobacco, or any other object. It would be reprehensible in the Government of St. Helena, but it seemed to him that as far as the Treasury were concerned, if they were under no circumstances to see any of the money again, it was a perfectly useless expense and trouble to provide an audit. He certainly recognised that Supplementary Estimates as a whole were objectionable, and some of those now before the House were of a novel character. They were small, and he did not in the least feel justified in making any very serious complaint of them. He hoped, however, that the hon. Gentleman would be able to tell them what in his opinion was the use of an audit when no balance was to be surrendered to the Exchequer.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.) said the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had very properly devoted his attention to the severely financial aspect of the Supplementary Estimate now before the House. He entirely agreed with the strong prejudice which the hon. Gentleman had expressed against Supplementary Estimates. He was sure that it ought to be the practice of every Government to keep them within moderate proportions. That was always the precept which they themselves had enjoined, early and late, during some periods of the last Parliament, and they were endeavouring, so far as the Colonial Office was concerned, to do their best to live up to the practice which they had enjoined, not very successfully, upon others. But he was bound to say that he did not think any serious charge could be brought against them in regard to this Estimate. Very often a Supplementary Estimate was needed because the original Estimate had been exceeded, but he thought that such a ground required a special measure of explanation, because there had been a mistake or a miscalculation. But none of the items included in this very small Vote arose from under-estimating. There had been no mistake whatever. They arose entirely from new circumstances which had sprung up. If the hon. Gentleman looked through the Vote, he would see that the last three were entirely due to new circumstances, and that the first one, which appeared on the Paper as an under-estimate, was not so really, because the old contract for the West Indian Mail Service had lapsed, and it was not until the autumn that the new arrangements—which were merely temporary arrangements—were entered into, by which a subsidy of £8,500 a year, a very much smaller subsidy than was previously paid, became necessary. Consequently, it had not been possible to estimate for that item before the ordinary Estimates were presented. The hon. Member was also greatly concerned at the statement in the explanatory notes that although the grant of money to St. Helena was to be subject to the audit of the Comptroller and Auditor-General no surrender would be made to the Exchequer of any balance. He was informed that such a practice was abundantly justified by precedent over the whole area of the Estimates. It should not be the rule, but from time to time exceptions were permitted. He thought the hon. Gentleman would see that there was great advantage in certain cases in allowing a little latitude. Supposing the hon. Gentleman were to say that whatever was not expended of the sum granted to St. Helena should be surrendered to the Exchequer, he would offer a very great incentive to the Government of the island to say to the persons who were concerned in that grant that they must make sure to spend the money, so that none of it would have to be surrendered to the Exchequer.

MR. BOWLES said what he suggested was that the proper thing to do was to make this really a free grant in aid. If no balance was to be returned an audit was a useless and unnecessary formality.

MR. CHURCHILL said he could not agree with the hon. Gentleman in that respect. Not only was it most important that the House and the Minister in charge of the Estimates should know that the money of the taxpayers voted for certain purposes was directed to those purposes, but it was also most important that the Colonial Office should have detailed information by communication with the Government of St. Helena as to the spending of these sums of money, in order to secure that there was no waste, and that a satisfactory result was obtained. On the whole, and with all respect for the hon. Member's hereditary interest in financial purity, he thought they might claim that they had a clean sheet to present to the House so far as the Colonial Office was concerned, in regard to the sums of money required in the Supplementary Estimates. The hon. Member for the Blackpool Division of Lancashire and the hon. Member for Tewkesbury had both referred to the subject of relieving distress in St. Helena, not merely for the moment, but by some permanent method of producing wealth, by means of the flax industry. He would feel more inclined to congratulate the hon. Member for Tewkesbury on the extent of the knowledge and information which he had brought to the subject than the hon. Member for Blackpool, whose speech had not contributed very much to their information on the subject. The hon. Member for Blackpool had accused him of inaccuracy. He would be very sorry to give inaccurate information, but he was informed that his original statement was accurate. The Government of St. Helena were ready to remove very nearly 200 men; they had heard from the hon. Member for Tewkesbury that the number was over 180, and that saving, direct and indirect, meant, according to the War Office, upwards of £35,000 a year. That being so, he thought it would be seen that they were making a thrifty financial arrangement with regard to the island.

MR. ASHLEY: I based my remarks on the Secretary for War's statement.

MR. CHURCHILL said he had just had an opportunity of consulting his right hon. friend the Secretary for War, and he found that the statement he had made was entirely correct. The hon. Gentleman was in doubt whether the flax industry would prosper, but he saw no reason why it should not. He gathered from the hon. Member for Tewkesbury, who had considerable knowledge of the matter, that they were acting wisely and thriftily in taking the step proposed. At any rate a flourishing flax industry of modest dimensions and not unremunerative, was carried on from 1876 to 1880, and its failure was largely due to the circumstance that the factories were in places inconveniently situated; but by the employment of an expert, and with the aid of past experience, the Government hoped to be able to avoid the errors which caused the failure of the flax industry when it was previously in existence. He gathered from the hon. Member for Tewkesbury, with whom the hon. Member for Blackpool might very well consult in these matters, that £400 a year would not be an inadequate sum for the kind of man wanted for this particular sort of work. But this was not the only plan they had in regard to St. Helena. They had given a small sum of £300 in aid of immediate distress, in aid of certain persons in necessitous circumstances; and they were now considering whether they could help out of public money to remove some of these people from St. Helena to the main land. The Government had also arranged with the Admiralty to allow ships of war that might be conveniently passing the island to buy the cattle which in the altered circumstances were beyond the needs of the population. His hon. friend the Member for Sutherland had dealt with a question which was not touched upon last Tuesday, namely, the grant to the Imperial Institute. The Government were asking for a very small sum of money, but it was for a very worthy object, and there was hardly any item of expenditure he would have more confidence in recommending to the House. The Imperial Institute was gradually fulfilling its mission.

MR. MORTON: It has cost a great deal of money.

MR. CHURCHILL said that was perfectly true, but it was worth all the money it had cost. Through the agency of the Imperial Institute the Crown Colonies and Protectorates were every day coming into closer contact with our industries, and were producing an ever-increasing stream of many varieties of raw material that was indispensable to the industries of the country, and samples of those products were always on view at the Institute so that persons interested might learn where they were to be obtained. The Institute also constituted a sort of central laboratory of research in which questions raised by the self-governing Colonies and the Crown Colonies and Protectorates could be investigated. They had to be very careful not to use the Imperial Institute staff for the purpose of saving private persons the cost of an analyst's fee. Consequently they hardly ever furnished information except to the Government of the Colony concerned, but they did furnish year by year and month by month a great deal of valuable information to the Government. As many as 6,300 letters were written last year from the Imperial Institute giving valuable information in regard to these products to the Governors of the Colonies and Protectorates, and the exhibition had been visited by 80,000 persons. The annual cost of carrying on the Institute was not very great. The funds for the purpose were supplied by contributions from the Crown Colonies and Protectorates, a small subvention of £650 from India, and £3,000 a year provided by the interest on the original endowment of the Institute. Formerly there was a further sum of £2,000 a year contributed by the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, but that came to an end in 1905, and it was partly to fill up the gap thus caused that the grant of £1,400 had been placed on the Paper.

Mr. MORTON: Why did the Commissioners withdraw their grant?

Mr. CHURCHILL: They withdrew it because they did not propose to pay it any longer.

Mr. MORTON: We should do likewise.

Mr. CHURCHILL said it would be a pity if the good work that was being done by the Institute were brought to an end for want of funds. The prosperity of the Crown Colonies and Protectorates was developing so rapidly that it was possible to hope that their contributions would soon relieve this country of the grant to the Imperial Institute. He agreed that they ought to be very careful not to make an undue demand upon the taxpayers of this country for the purpose, because those taxes were paid by the very poor as well as by the rich. He did not think the small sum of £1,400 would be an imprudent investment on our part, and he hoped the House would sanction it. The grant from the City was really a permanent endowment of the Institute; and the suggested museum in the City was not carried out because it was found that the purpose for which it was intended was already satistorily discharged by the Board of Trade. He was sure his hon. friend would not on consideration apply the epithet "adventurers" to the distinguished people on the committee of the Institute, whose valuable services were entirely honorary, and still less to the officials, whose services were generous proportionately to the salaries they received.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN agreed with the hon. Gentleman as to the value of the services rendered to the Crown Colonies and Dependencies by the Imperial Institute. He suggested, in the most friendly spirit, that care should be taken that the Institute did not duplicate the work which was so admirably done by Kew in regard to colonial products. It seemed to him that probably a great number of the letters written to the Imperial Institute were similar to those received at Kew, and which were dealt with by the officials at Kew. He alluded to such inquiries as the commercial value of some particular agricultural product in some colony or dependency, whether the sample sent was saleable in the English market, what was the right seed for them to plant, and where they could obtain it. That kind of work had been done at Kew with great zeal and success, and he hoped the Imperial Institute and Kew would be kept sufficiently in touch to take care that two men were not answering the same questions and possibly giving contradictory advice. He also suggested that specimens of the raw materials on view at the Institute should be sent for exhibition on tour through districts concerned with manufactures in which those materials were employed. The unfortunate condition of the people of St. Helena had the warmest sympathy of the Opposition, and they would heartily support the grant for their relief. In that matter the Government could not do less than they had done, and he was not quite certain that they ought not to do more in other cases, such as those in connection with the dockyards and arsenals, where enormous discharges of workmen had taken place and where workmen very often were forced to leave the district and seek employment elsewhere. He wished to say a few words upon the purely financial aspect of the question. The Under-Secretary of State had just explained that this was a moderate Vote. He agreed that it was such a Vote as could very properly be put down as a Supplementary Estimate. The right hon. Gentleman had taken credit for the fact that no part of it was due to error in estimating. He wished to say a word by way of caution as to the stringency with which the hon. Member laid down the rule that any Supplementary Estimate necessitated by under-estimating was in itself a bad thing.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I said it required special explanation.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said it should be borne in mind that such Estimates would sometimes be necessary.

If to the permanent officials it was made difficult to get a Supplementary Estimate where they had under-estimated they would always over-estimate, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be forced to raise more money than was necessary in order that the officials might have a sufficient amount. What they were now considering were, he thought, fair charges for a Supplementary Estimate, because in the first place they were unforeseen and urgent, and they were charges belonging to the year in which the Vote was taken. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies was under a misapprehension. From the remarks he had made he seemed to be of opinion that a grant in aid was the proper way of dealing with a matter of this kind. The Government of which he himself was a member were never allowed a grant in aid without being denounced by hon. Gentlemen opposite and even by the Under-Secretary himself.

MR. CHURCHILL: I think not.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that was a matter on which the hon. Member's memory was no doubt better than his own. But it was a fact that the Conservative Government were denounced by hon. Gentlemen opposite for proposing grants in aid. He was glad that experience of office had brought wisdom and that they had now learned what they refused to learn in Opposition, namely, that a grant in aid was not only a reasonable, but the only economical way of dealing with some matters. As to the audit, he pointed out that all the Comptroller and Auditor-General would do in this matter would be to see that the money voted by Parliament was paid to the Government of St. Helena; he would not make an audit as to how the money was spent by that Government.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Colonial Office will get an audit of it.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the audit mentioned in the note to the Estimate had nothing to do with the Colonial Office audit, and therefore, so far as the Comptroller and Auditor-General was concerned, the matter would rest. In cases of this kind payments to the Colonies must always be audited by the Colonial Office.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said the Under-Secretary had defended this arrangement because he said it would be a very great inducement to the authorities of St. Helena to pay away the whole of the sum if they had to pay back the balance to the Treasury. That argument was perfectly sound, and it was one which was often used, but it applied equally to every conceivable kind of Vote. He ventured to think that the repayment of the balance of a Vote was an advantage that had received exaggerated praise. If the present Vote was a good one, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be pressed to abolish the system of repayment altogether, and to trust to the spending department to do its best with the money entrusted to it. The grant was either in relief of the poverty of the island or an aid to an industry. If it was a grant in aid of an industry he would like to hear what the strict fiscal economists among the supporters of the Government thought of the policy. The Government should also give some account of the circumstances which led them to suppose that the grant of £4,070 was going to make a permanent improvement in the condition of St. Helena. Unless it was going to do that it was really throwing away money. They had received no information on that point except what they had heard from the hon. Member for Tewkesbury. He did not think they had received any information to lead them to suppose that the flax industry was going to be set up by the £4,000. He understood the Under-Secretary to indicate that the grant would be renewed. Grants in relief were really very dangerous things indeed. If they were to be applied generally there might as well be a grant in relief whenever men were dismissed from a dockyard. They ought to know the special ground which took this particular grant out of the general rule that such grants were objectionable.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) said he was afraid he could not agree that this was a moderate

Supplementary Estimate. He thought three of the subheads were of the most immoderate character, and one, that relating to the repatriation of Chinese coolies, he considered absolutely unnecessary. It certainly ought not to fall on the British taxpayers. Why was it placed upon the Paper at all? It was placed there as a sop to the consciences of hon. Members who supported the Under-Secretary for the Colonies. The cost of the repatriation of Chinese coolies ought to be paid by the mine-owners themselves. That was the policy which was being adopted in the New Hebrides Convention, where it was provided that the employer should pay for the repatriation of native labourers.

MR. CHURCHILL: If they do not break their contract.

MR. STANLEY WILSON asked if the Government in that case would pay the cost of repatriating the labourer. They were going to spend nice sums of money in the future if they were to be responsible for the repatriation of the native labourers in the New Hebrides as well as the Chinese coolies in South Africa. He was sure everybody wished to see the Imperial Institute develop into a great institution, and there was no one who was not glad to see a sum of money upon the Estimates for it.

*MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said he should like to add a word with regard to the grant-in-aid for the flax industry in St. Helena, because flax cultivation was a subject on which, perhaps, he almost alone in the House had some experience. At first he did not know whether it was the kind of flax grown in the North of Ireland or another kind grown in New Zealand which was suggested. He now knew that it was the flax which was grown in New Zealand known as the *Phormiam Tenax*, which had spread throughout the islands and was a most useful fibre-bearing plant. There was at the very first great difficulty found in freeing it from glutinous matter. Machinery was set up to overcome this, and, although for a time it was found totally ineffective, he was glad to say it had now been largely remedied, so that if a considerable quantity of flax was grown in St. Helena there was the prospect, provided the latest machinery was put up, that an industry might be started which would relieve the distressed islanders. He therefore hoped that the Government would provide the best machinery that could be found. If that were done, he saw no reason why the industry should not be profitable, and on that ground he would certainly support the Vote, and be glad to see it down again in next year's Estimates.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said the Under-Secretary for the Colonies did not seem to realise the very exact analogy between the repatriation of the Chinese coolies in South Africa and the repatriation of the native labourers in the New Hebrides. The Opposition believed there was an exact analogy. He did not see why, if it were necessary to spend so large an amount of money on the repatriation of Chinese coolies, it was not equally necessary in repatriating indentured labourers from the New Hebrides who might be as unaware of the conditions of their labour as the Chinese coolies were in South Africa. Therefore, as the Government had established the extraordinary precedent of sending back the Chinese coolies to their own country because they wished to break their contract, without any other reason for going back, he would like to have some explanation from some other member of the Government—perhaps the Chief Secretary for Ireland—why such a course was not adopted in this instance if it was to be justified in South Africa. He had no doubt it would be said that the French Government would have to be approached in regard to the question, but he would be sorry for the Minister who was willing to do that. The French Government would treat a suggestion of that kind as an absurdity; and therefore he thought the Opposition were justified in saying that the repatriation of Chinese coolies to their own country for no other reason than that they were tired of their work was also an absurdity.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) thought that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies was a little captious in his criticism of the hon. Member for Blackpool. His hon. friend had taken his information from the statement of the Secretary for War, who had evidently been guilty of a numerical inexactitude in regard to the garrison of St. Helena. As to the merits of the grant-in-aid to St. Helena, he understood that the Government had given it because they believed in the principle of giving consolation money to the island, which had suffered from the withdrawal of troops in pursuance of various military considerations. But St. Helena was not the only portion of the Empire which had so suffered. He would remind the Under-Secretary for the Colonies that claims for grants-in-aid had more than once been put before the Colonial Office by St. Lucia and Barbados. He wanted to know whether the crop which was to be grown in St. Helena was ordinary flax. Assistance was to be given for machinery, water-power, sheds, and drying machines, but if in addition there was to be a contribution towards the cultivation of flax itself and that failed, the Government would have to come to the House for an increased subvention.

MR. CHURCHILL said that if the flax industry was a success in St. Helena it was possible that in a few years the Colony would be self-supporting; but if not, then further demands would have to be met for assistance in some other form.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said he was much obliged for the answer of the hon. Gentleman, which was what he expected; but he hoped that when opportunity offered the claims of other parts of the Empire for subventions would be considered.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies spoke as if it were a matter for congratulation that the figures of the Supplementary Estimate were not due to an under-estimate. He supposed, strictly speaking, that that was true, but he thought he was justified in saying that the size of the figure for the repatriation of the Chinese coolies was very largely due to the under-estimates of the Under-Secretary and his permanent officials. If his memory served him right the hon. Gentleman estimated the cost per head of repatriation at £17 10s., and on the same day that this Supplementary Estimate was issued he thought the hon. Gentleman in answer to a Question, stated that the number repatriated was 550 odd, or about 1 per cent. of the total number. Taking the number at 550, the sum asked for in this Estimate came to a very much larger sum than £17 10s. per head. If, on the other hand, a larger margin was provided for to allow for repatriation up to the end of the financial year, they would like to know what ground the Under-Secretary had for supposing that the rate of repatriation would increase so enormously during the last few weeks of the financial year. He found £17 10s. per head——

MR. CHURCHILL: It is not a case of under-estimating. This is the first Estimate ever presented on the subject and it cannot be an under-estimate.

MR. COURTHOPE said that in his first sentence he had said the hon. Gentleman's statement on the point was strictly true, but his figures would not be so large if his estimate in this House—not in the Estimates of last year, but as stated from his place on the Treasury Bench—had been correct. The hon. Gentleman estimated £17 10s. as the cost per head of repatriation. The present Estimate worked out at something like £40. He was quite certain the House was given to understand last year when the matter was under discussion, that the cost would be very much less than that, but he believed he was right in the figure he had stated. He hoped some reply would be given on the point. The figure was certainly mentioned from the Treasury Bench.

First Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said he wished to move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000 in respect of the Committee of Inquiry in regard to the Department of Agriculture in Ireland. Hon. Members would recollect that immediately after the present Government took office an announcement was made that they intended to appoint a

Committee to inquire into the working of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland. That Department was set up by an Act of Parliament which was passed in the year 1899 and came into operation in 1900. The Department, therefore, had been at work for a period of only six years. The first observation he wished to make was that this was the only case that he could recall in a somewhat prolonged experience in which a Government had undertaken to appoint a Committee without any demand coming from any person either inside or outside the House. He would urge upon the Chief Secretary for Ireland the fact that there was absolutely no demand from any public authority or body in Ireland or from Members of the House for an inquiry. There were two reasons why that demand was not made. First of all, because the Agricultural Department was only six years of age, and they in Ireland thought they knew all about its work; and, secondly, because they understood that the first work of the Government would be to re-organise all the Departments in Ireland, and they could not conceive what good purpose would be served by an inquiry into the working of the youngest Department, pending the proposal of the Government to transfer all duties of this sort to popular control. However limited might be the scheme which the Government introduced for the transference of the powers of the Departments to the new Irish authority, it seemed to him an extraordinary and unprecedented course for the Government to set up an expensive Committee costing £1,800 or £2,000 when there was no demand for it. When they questioned the Government on the subject, moreover, they were unable to obtain any explanation whatever, but a very remarkable correspondence between the late Chief Secretary, Mr. Bryce, and Sir Horace Plunkett was disclosed. Mr. Bryce asked Sir Horace Plunkett whether in view of this inquiry taking place he would continue to act as the head of the Department pending its conclusion and meanwhile cease to express his political opinions. That was a most extraordinary request. Sir Horace Plunkett was a member of the late Government, and again and again a pledge was given by that Government that the holder of the office of the head of this Department would remain a member of the Government. The present Government, however, when pressed for some ground for the appointment of this Committee were unable, in spite of strong remonstrances from that quarter of the House, to give any explanation except the production of this correspondence which involved the continuance in office at the head of the Department of that gentleman who was undoubtedly a Unionist in politics. No doubt Sir Horace Plunkett had as much right to be a Unionist as he (Mr. Dillon) had to be a Nationalist, but he had no right to be a member of the present Government, as in reality he was, in view of the pledges which had been given. He made no charge of any kind against the late Chief Secretary, who came into office in a strange country in which, as the present Chief Secretary, had said, he found himself in an immense jungle of Boards and Departments and officials. But he did say that the real object of the appointment of this Committee was to find some means of continuing Sir Horace Plunkett at the head of the Department. If the Committee had not been appointed no doubt Sir Horace Plunkett would have left his office in the same way that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen above the gangway had done. Inasmuch as the Government could give no reasons for the institution of the inquiry, he could only come to the conclusion that the decision was come to before the late Chief Secretary understood the wiles and deceptions of Irish political life, and that it was forced upon him in order to maintain Sir Horace Plunkett at the head of the Department. He thought he was justified in saying that in the whole annals of the British House of Commons there was no case parallel to this, where a member of a late Administration, after his Party had left office, had been retained at the head of an important Department of State. Some of them who did not approve of Sir Horace Plunkett's administration, and who in any case protested against this action, questioned the Prime Minister early last sesion upon the subject. And what did the right hon. Gentleman say? He said that the re-appointment of Sir Horace Plunkett was a purely temporary appointment, that it was solely for the purpose of aiding this Committee of Inquiry, and—so far as his memory carried him—that it would come to an end immediately the Committee reported. And so specific was the pledge given when the Act was passed in 1899, that the office would be a political office, and that the person heading it should be a member of the Government, that Mr. Gerald Balfour, who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, was asked who was to appoint this man, and he then said the appointment would be by one of the principal Secretaries of State. He was to be a Minister sitting in this House and responsible to the House for the working of the Department. Why did they take this particular opportunity of raising the question? They desired to impress upon the House that the Committee having carried on its inquiry, having closed its evidence in the month of July last, considerably before the Committee on University Education closed its evidence, had not yet reported, and they had been told that the Report would not be ready until May or June, whereas the University Committee reported a month ago. He wished to know why this Committee was appointed. Why had there been this useless expenditure? Why was the Report so long delayed? They were confirmed in the conviction that the whole purpose and object of the inquiry had been to return Sir H. Plunkett at the head of this Department in Ireland and that the purpose of the delay was to continue him in that office. He supposed the idea of certain people in Ireland was that the public mind would get accustomed to this state of affairs, and that they would say he had done very well. It was a kind of *damnosa hereditas*, that had been left to the Government. "Why not leave him where he is?" it would be asked, and so they would be saddled with him at the head of the Department. He protested against the waste of money, against the delay in issuing the Report, and against Sir Horace Plunkett's retention at the head of this Department, and he would ask the Government, without waiting for the Report, to regularise the matter by removing him and redeeming the pledge given to the House of Commons, by putting upon the Treasury Bench someone who was in harmony with the Government, and who could share their responsibility and answer to the House for the operations of the Agricultural Department. The Chief Secretary was obliged to discharge the functions of many Ministers, under circumstances of great difficulty, going, as he necessarily did, to a country with the circumstances of which he inadequately acquainted. It was upon that ground that this appointment was made. If there was another Minister sitting with him in the House he would find a good deal of responsibility taken off his shoulders. They were not anxious on the Nationalist benches to harass the right hon. Gentleman or to add to his labours. They were slow to put questions to him. [Cheers.] That seemed to excite the hilarity of hon. Gentlemen above the gangway, but hon. Members must remember that there were eighty Irish Members and they did not put one quarter of the number of questions that other hon. Members did.

AN HON. MEMBER: We are the Opposition.

MR. DILLON: And, we I suppose, are in a state of suspended animation, voting in opposition one day and with the Government the next. The hon. Member, continuing, said that as contrasted with the questions put to the right hon. Gentleman's predecessors Irish Members were anxious to spare the Chief Secretary. But there were many questions arising in connection with the Agricultural Department which they would like to ask, and he thought they were entitled to have a man on the Treasury Bench to reply to them. Whatever the Report of this unnecessary Committee might be, that Report must be handed over to the Department which was to control these boards in the future. Surely the right hon. Gentleman would not tell the

House that he was going to embark upon the reorganisation of this particular system of administration before he embarked on the larger task of reorganising the whole administration of Ireland. If he was not going to do that he ought, in the meantime, to get rid of Sir Horace Plunkett and to put on the Treasury Bench a man who would be responsible to the House for the administration of that Department.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£10,000,' and insert '£9,000,'—(*Mr. Dillon*,)—instead thereof."

Question proposed, "That '£10,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.) said he was very much obliged to the House generally for the sympathetic manner in which it had received the feeling references made to his position, and he entirely shared that sympathy himself. So far as the position of Sir Horace Plunkett was concerned, that stood exactly where it did when the Prime Minister answered the Question to which the hon. Member had referred. His Answer was a short one. It was as follows—

> "My view of the case is this—that the present state of things is purely temporary and purely exceptional. There is no intention, and there never has been any intention of converting an office which is of one character into an office of another character, with the same official serving in it. That has never been contemplated. But as the whole matter was under review in order to place the Department in many respects on a better footing, it was thought that there was no harm in continuing Sir Horace Plunkett in the position rather than make a new appointment which would have to be subject to any change found to be necessary."†

That was the view the Prime Minister then presented. Sir Horace Plunkett's position was purely temporary, and there never was any intention and, there was no intention whatever now, of the Government's allowing a post which was created for one purpose to be retained by the same official under entirely different circumstances. He certainly looked forward to a time when he would have the assistance of a colleague belonging to the same Administration sitting by his side, and taking over the very great burden of the administration of the Agricultural Department, until that more fortunate day arrived when that and other Departments of the State might find a proper and better administration in Ireland itself. That was the position of affairs. He could not for a moment believe that this Committee was set up by Mr. Bryce in order to keep Sir Horace Plunkett in the position which he now occupied. Mr. Bryce was of opinion that very great good could be done by having an inquiry of the kind which had gone on so long into the position of agriculture, fishing, and particularly technical education, in Ireland itself. With a great knowledge of matters—greater knowledge than he (Mr. Birrell) had—Mr. Bryce seemed to have had considerable faith in the value of the Report which they were now expecting. The Committee consisted of a number of gentlemen well qualified to pursue the inquiry. It included particularly an official of his acquaintance in his late office—Mr. Ogilvie of South Kensington, than whom no man was more competent to inquire into the whole branch of technical education. There were other subjects—agriculture and fishing—on which it was considered that a Report would be most valuable, and he could assure hon. Gentlemen opposite that his predecessor appointed this Committee with great confidence that its inquiries would be most beneficial to Ireland. The delay, he thought, arose partly from the extreme complication of the questions which had arisen in connection with technical education in Ireland, and also owing to the fact that one of the Committeemen—the Hon. John Dryden—was a Canadian. Whether it was wise or not to put a gentleman who resided permanently out of their jurisdiction on the Committee was another matter. But Mr. Dryden's knowledge of agricultural problems that existed in Canada made his of services great value. Unfortunately, he had gone back to Canada, and the delay in making the Report thus arose. He was afraid the Report would not be made till May. He could not hold out any hope of its being made earlier. He had communicated with Sir Kenelm

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† See (4) *Debates*, clii., 355.

Digby, the Chairman of the Committee, on the subject, and he hoped when they got the Report its value would justify the length of time they had been in expectation of it. The Report, whatever it might contain, in no way affected the question of Sir Horace Plunkett's position. That remained entirely within the power and disposition of the Government to consider, and it remained exactly as had been stated by the Premier. The appointment was a temporary one. He did not know that there was absolutely any occasion to wait for the result of these inquiries, although probably it would be found better to do so. He did not know how far his position was in any way a subject matter of the reference to the Committee, or that they would say a single thing about it. He imagined they would report about the value of the work and suggest improvements in connection with it. The subject remained entirely within the power of the Prime Minister to do just as he thought fit in the matter. He could not think that the hon. Member was right in suggesting that the Committee which he hoped, would have valuable results, was simply concocted in order to save the situation for Sir Horace Plunkett.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said it would have been noticed that the right hon. Gentleman had not said a single word in justification of this temporary appointment. He had given his explanation of the delay that had arisen with regard to the publication of the Report, and he had admitted that the appointment was a temporary appointment, and that at the time it was made, when the Agricultural Department was established, it was a political appointment, and that a pledge was given that the position should be filled by a gentleman with a seat on the Treasury Bench. But the right hon. Gentleman had not said one word in justification of the temporary appointment's being made at all. What argument was there for continuing it? It was not to be until the Committee reported, because the right hon. Gentleman said that that had probably nothing to say to that. What, then, was the reason? He (Mr. Redmond) was a member of the body called the Recess Committee which sat before the Agricultural Department was established. It was in consequence of the Report of that Committee that the Bill was introduced into the House. They made certain recommendations to the Government, and on those recommendations the Government brought in the Bill. One of the fundamental recommendations was that this appointment should be held by a member of the Government, and that he should sit on the Treasury Bench and answer Questions. What occurred? Sir. Horace Plunkett lost his seat in the House, and if the Government of the day were not prepared to find a seat for him he ought to have been prepared to vacate his office. That was what any other Member of the Government would have done. He did not do so. He remained in office although not in the House, and when that Government went out of office they had the extraordinary experience of finding that when Members of the Party now in power were appointed to all the other vacant places a Member of the Unionist Party was appointed to this post. He was then eligible for election, and had Sir Horace Plunkett successfully contested a constituency they would have seen the extraordinary spectacle of a member of the Government sitting on the Unionist Benches, and giving expression to Unionist views. He could not conceive the right hon. Gentleman allowing such a state of things to continue for a moment. He did not wish to speculate as to the reason why Sir Horace Plunkett was given the appointment, but the fact remained that a ridiculous and anomalous situation had arisen, and for his part he joined his hon. friend in calling upon the Government not to wait for the Committee's Report, but immediately to put this office upon a constitutional basis, and to put in the place of this Unionist gentleman some member of the Government, so that there might be in the House a Minister responsible for the Department of Agriculture.

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, further proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

RAILWAY SERVANTS (HOURS OF LABOUR).

MR. W. HARVEY (Derbyshire, N.E.) rose to call attention to the hours of railway servants; and to move "That this House disapproves of engine-drivers, firemen, guards, and other classes of railway employés being compelled to be on duty during excessive hours and being allowed but short intervals of rest, and urges upon the Government the necessity of applying more vigorously the Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, and, if this is inefficient, to prepare an Amendment to the Act." The hon. Member said this was the first time it had been his pleasure to address that House, and he claimed the indulgence which he felt sure would be extended to him. In bringing forward this Motion, he was in complete harmony with the General Secretary of the Railway Servants Society, the hon. Member for Derby, who was the recognised representative of that body. When the Act of 1893 was passed it was expected by the trade unionists of the country, and especially by railway servants, that there would be a great diminution in the hours of railway servants. The first section of that Act provided that the hours of work should be within reasonable limits, but the words "reasonable limits" had never been accurately defined either in or out of the House. He asked why the sub-section providing that a railway company should be fined £100 a day for non-compliance with orders made under the Act had never been put into operation. It appeared to him that the Act had not been administered as the railway servants expected it would be when it was passed. During the month of July last year a Return was published which gave some startling figures which seemed to him fully to justify that clause being put into operation. From that Return they found that 58,057 railway servants had worked for thirteen hours a day; 21,733 had worked fourteen hours; 8,257 had worked fifteen hours; 3,811 had worked sixteen hours; 1,797 had worked seventeen hours; and 1,636 had worked eighteen hours and upwards a day. July was the best month that could be taken for the railway companies, because they had no fog, no snow, and no heavy mineral traffic, all of which increased the hours. Since that Return was published, things had gone from bad to worse, and railways were working their men exceptionally long hours and beyond anything he had quoted to the House. There were large centres of railway servants in the division he represented, and he had been able to collect somewhat startling information from the men about excessive hours of work. He was prepared to place the information before the President of the Board of Trade on condition that the men's names were not disclosed, because if they were disclosed the men would probably be dismissed or interfered with. The figures he was about to give were up-to-date and dealt with the existing state of things. On February 1st there were two cases of seventeen hours a day and two of eighteen hours. On February 6th, one of sixteen hours, one of seventeen hours, one of twenty-five hours, and one of thirty hours. On February 7th one of seventeen hours, three of twenty hours, one of twenty-two hours, one of twenty-eight hours, and one of thirty-one hours. In one case of thirteen days continuous work by one man, the average was thirteen hours thirty-six minutes a day; in another of eight days continuous work the average was thirteen hours twenty-two minutes a day; another, seven days, thirteen hours twenty-three minutes; another, also seven days, thirteen hours fifty-four minutes; one twelve days, fourteen hours fifty-eight minutes average; one six days, fifteen hours fifty minutes; another, seven days, thirteen hours fifteen minutes; and one other of seven days in which the average hours per day were thirteen hours fifty-eight minutes. But there were cases even worse than that. On January 1st of this year, out of 166 men working in a certain railway centre, twenty-four worked over thirteen hours a day; on the 2nd, thirty-seven; on the 3rd, thirty-seven; on the 4th, fifty-four; on the 5th, forty-six, and so on, until on February 1st they found that eighty-six men out of the 166 were working over thirteen hours a day. This system of long hours did not apply to one company alone. The Midland Railway Company had been in the van of progress and had initiated many reforms, but they did not appear to be concerned about this last reform of bringing down the hours of labour, so necessary in the interest of humanity. Last session the matter was debated in the House, and the President of the Board of Trade replying to the debate said—

> "He was obliged to his hon. friends for bringing this subject forward, and in the course of the next few months he hoped they would be able to clear up many of those cases in which there had been delay, and press the railway companies into conforming to the standard of twelve hours, which was rather high for any man."†

He wished to know whether the right hon. Gentleman's hope in regard to influencing the managers of the railway companies had been realised. There was a very serious side to the matter, and if hon. Members would only refer to the number of accidents occurring on the railways, he felt sure that they would agree with him that the time had come when this question, in the interests of the general community, ought to be dealt with. There had been published in the railway newspapers from the employers' point of view figures which were very misleading. Those statistics placed all railway servants in one class and compared them with the number of accidents. That was not fair, because there were a large number of clerks, managers, and other men who were never brought into actual contact with danger at all, and who had no right to be included in the statistics of accidents. He would take the three most dangerous grades of railway servants. He might add that he was indebted to the hon. Member for Derby for the statistics he was about to quote. Taking the goods guards and brakesmen of the railway companies, the fatal accidents were 27·10 for every 10,000 men employed. In the case of the shunters the percentage was 26·17 fatal accidents per 10,000, and the figure for the permanent way men was 13·47 per 10,000. Those were the men who had to work on the dangerous parts of the railway system, and something ought to be done to prevent that awful death rate among them. Probably he would hear from the opponents of the Motion the old stereotyped argument of economy and competition. That was the first time that he had had the honour of speaking in the House, but he ventured to assert that more men had been sacrificed on the altar of economics than upon any other altar in the country. The time had come when the humanity, and the life and limb of the nation, which was the wealth-producing part of it, should receive more consideration than mere economics, and nothing should left undone to save the lives of those who worked on our great railway systems. The question affected the general public most seriously. He submitted that the Government ought to take up the matter without any further delay. If they looked at railway accidents like the Salisbury catastrophe, which resulted in the death of twenty-eight persons, or the collision which occurred at Saltcoats in which seventy were injured, he thought the general public would agree that those men ought not to be allowed to work excessive hours to the danger of the public. But there was another side to the question. He did not want to take up too much time, because he knew there were experts anxious to address the House. He would, however, like to point out that this matter had something to do with the unemployed question. It was a subject which had been discussed on every public platform in the country. So long as they had one man working three days straight off and another man not working at all they would have the unemployed question unsolved. He would like to have a reliable computation made of the number of men who would be absorbed from the unemployed if reasonable hours of work were adopted on all the great railway systems. If humanity was to be sacrificed in this way, if men were to be called upon to work unreasonable hours, thus endangering their lives and running the risk of leaving widows and orphans to be kept out of charity—if all this could not be prevented under private enterprise, the sooner the State took over the railways of the country and managed them in the interests of the nation as a whole, the better. They had great expectations from the President of the Board of Trade, and he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he would have the full support of hon. Members on both sides in strengthening the

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† See (4) *Debates*, clvii., 580–1.

Act of 1893 if it was too weak and feeble, in order to make it impossible for these men to be worked such long hours. He thanked the House for the patient hearing they had given him on his first occasion of addressing them. He trusted that he had put his case fairly and without offence to anyone. He was not interested in causing dissension, but he was interested in saving life and limb. He had himself worked twenty-five years at that business in another sphere, and his highest ambition and concern had always been to save life and limb, and protect the breadwinner of the family. He had much pleasure in moving the Resolution standing in his name.

*MR. BELL (Derby), in seconding, said he wished to express indebtedness on behalf of the railway men of the country to his hon. friend who had so ably moved the Resolution. He knew that the railway men would feel grateful to the hon. Member, or to any other hon. Member who took up this question in the interests of railway men. Upon each occasion when the question had been before the House those interested in the management of railways had endeavoured to impress upon the President of the Board of Trade that things were not nearly so bad as they had been made out. He would very much like to know whether those interested in the railway companies had a good case to justify the intolerable state of things which now existed. He claimed to be fairly moderate in his opinions upon the question, and he was sorry that his moderation had not been accepted in the same spirit as that in which he had always endeavoured to put his case. He was afraid that there had been undue delay in dealing with the cases which had been referred to the Board of Trade. He would like to have some explanation why each year when the Return was being published under the Act of 1893, there was generally a kind of polishing touch apologising on behalf of the companies for the few instances reported, which tended to prove that the long hours worked on railways had practically been reduced to a minimum. In the Return issued in August last year a sentence was put in by the Secretary to the Board of Trade stating that—

> "It appears that in the autumn of last year, owing to improved trade, there took place on some lines, particularly in the Midland district, a large increase in the traffic which led to congestion, the working of later trains, and the employment of men for longer hours."

Instead of improving, things had got considerably worse, and there was something which certainly needed looking into. The Return each year was almost an apology for the railway companies, and he would like to have some justification for that apology. It would be said by some that the figures given by his hon. friend referred to isolated cases. There might be some instances in which the long hours worked were due to exceptional causes, such as fogs, breakdowns, and snow storms, but the President of the Board of Trade could, if he chose, bring down to the House a barrow-load of complaints sent to him of cases where no such reasons could be given. He would give a few examples where it had been habitual on the part of the companies to work their men excessive hours. He had a return from a man showing the hours he had worked from November to the end of February. He had before him the daily details, but he would give only the weekly hours. For the first week ending 6th December the hours on duty were eighty, and for the twelve following weeks the hours were 79, 84, 66 (two days off at Christmas), 80, 89, 81, 95, 62, 118, 83, 88 and 105. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Was that on an English railway?"] It was the case of a goods guard on the Midland Railway. He would give a few instances of the hours worked by men on the footplate of locomotives. Although some hon. Members might not understand much of railway working, yet they would be able to appreciate what was meant by being kept on duty on great locomotives from eighteen to thirty hours at a stretch. That was a common occurrence, and it was absolutely intolerable that it should be permitted. At Staveley, on the Midland Railway, there were 166 men who, during January, worked 1,676 shifts of from thirteen to twenty-eight hours. In February the same number of men worked 1,093 shifts. It could be seen from those figures that excessive hours of duty were not rare, but frequent. He had a return showing a number of instances in which locomotive men on the Midland Railway at Nottingham had been on duty from seventeen to twenty-two hours at a stretch. On four consecutive days in February the hours of one man's duty were 16, 17, 12½, and 17½. No man could work long hours without completely exhausting himself. He would like to call the attention of the House to the practice of railway companies of fixing a limit of eight hours for rest, and, in some cases, nine hours. He would deal only with the maximum. The nine hours meant only from the time a man booked off until he again booked on. It could easily be imagined that a man who went off duty after seventeen or eighteen hours work and resumed duty again at the end of nine hours, and continued to act in that manner for a whole week, must be physically exhausted, and rendered absolutely unfit to do his duty properly. He was a source of danger not only to himself and his fellow workmen, but also to the travelling public. Some people might think that a goods engine driver or guard had nothing to do with the travelling public, and that they could not be a source of danger to them. Had not hon. Members read of accidents occurring to passenger trains because something had happened to a goods train or engine on the line or in a shunting yard? Men were not in a condition to do the work as it ought to be done, if they had to remain on duty long hours. At Normanton on the Midland Railway, during the month of January, one man in sixteen days worked 269 hours and thirty-five minutes, or an average of sixteen hours fifty-one minutes per day. The same thing applied to February. Taking the whole of this particular depot for the week from 17th to 23rd February inclusive, there were sixty-four cases of men working over twelve hours; sixty-eight over thirteen; sixty-eight over fourteen; forty-six over fifteen; thirty-three over sixteen; twenty-two over seventeen; and ninety over eighteen. Some of the ninety would work as long as 100 hours in the seven days. He had an instance reported to him where a man worked 130 hours in the seven days. He did not know how many hours rest that man could have had. It would be said now, as it had been said before, that the men did not object to a little overtime, and, indeed, that they liked it. He could assure hon. Members, and the President of the Board of Trade in particular, that the men disliked it. For one man who might crave for overtime irrespective of the injury to himself, there were 100 who objected to it. This was the language of one man who had written to him—

> "It is a disgrace that men should be compelled to work such long hours. Just fancy an average of eighty-five hours a week for thirteen weeks. . . . I can assure you that we are heartily sick of it. Please use your power and influence on our behalf so that we may be recognised as human beings, and not machines."

He would give one more instance from the Midland Railway. A workman after giving details of the ninety-two, ninety-six, and 100 hours he had worked during three consecutive weeks in February said: "I feel quite done up." It was not surprising that he should feel done up in the circumstances. A return which he had received showed that at Toton on the Midland Railway, during twenty-six days in January, a man had worked an average of thirteen hours and fifteen minutes per day. On one occasion the period of duty ran up to twenty-seven and a-half hours at a stretch. In his own constituency at Derby the locomotive men, as well as the goods guards, complained bitterly of the excessive hours they were called upon to work. It had been going on for a considerable time, and it was not due to a spurt of traffic, or to two or three days fog dislocating the working arrangements. Nor was it due to the storms which had occurred. He found that the Great Central Railway was practically as bad as the Midland Railway in the matter of long hours. During the twenty-six days ended 2nd February goods guards employed at Sheffield worked, in seventy instances, over sixteen hours at a stretch. The men complained, too, that their hours were so irregular that they had no proper time for rest at home; and the guards of the Great Central, who ran to Grimsby, complained that the lodging-house provided for them by the company was overcrowded and unfit for their accommodation; and that men had to wait to go to bed until others in occupation had got up. They complained that the barracks were near where shunting operations were carried on, and that generally they were unable to get the rest they ought to get, the result being that when they returned to duty they were not in a fit state. Another reason alleged for the excessive hours being worked, and he believed it to be a good reason unless he heard something to the contrary, was what he might call the penny wise and the pound foolish system adopted by the railway companies in working their traffic. He knew that the Great Central and Midland Companies had recently adopted a system of employing emergency guards. These emergency guards were not, as one might expect, qualified and competent men, put on to relieve the ordinary guards in emergencies, to facilitate the working of the traffic—men who, for instance, had eight or nine years experience; but they were men, very often, who had never been on trains, who had no experience of the work, and who, in many instances, did not even know the road they had to work. That was done to save 3s. or 4s. a week, which was the difference between the wages of an ordinary guard and those of an emergency guard. It was not surprising that they could not get the trains along the road in time, although the excuse was made by the company that that was on account of the booming trade. He was satisfied that the right hon. Gentleman sitting on his right did not approve of these things, but they did not seek to probe them to the bottom so as to learn actually what went on. They simply depended on information supplied to them by their officials. He knew of a case where an emergency guard was compelled to work a train on a road which he did not know, because if he had refused he would have courted the displeasure of the officials, and they knew what the result of that would be. That sort of thing must be stopped, and he hoped the right hon Gentleman to whom he had referred would see that it was stopped. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company was another great sinner in that respect. He was a railway man himself, and had operated trains for many years, and he knew that that company had adopted a system of cutting competition with other railway companies. Trains were made up of as many as 120 wagons frequently with two engines in front and four behind. Of course they often broke down, and he was satisfied that the great length of those goods and mineral trains was largely responsible for the excessive hours the men had to work. A goods guard named Wilkinson, stationed at Bury, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, was killed at Rochdale on 12th February this year, after being on duty fourteen hours and forty minutes. There were only thirty-five goods guards at the Bury depot, yet during January, 1907, there were 295 cases of men being on duty over twelve hours. He dared say that the excessive hours which Wilkinson was called upon to work were responsible for the unfortunate fellow's death. It might be difficult to prove that, because the poor man had gone, and probably the officials of the Company who instructed him to work these excessive hours would say that it was not so. The right hon. Gentleman had promised an inquiry into the case; but he asked him that the inquiry should go back so as to learn how many hours Wilkinson had been at work the whole week, and how many hours rest he had had. The poor fellow might have had a short day before that on which he was killed; but he might have had long duty during the whole of the week. The Great Eastern Railway Company was not free from blame in this matter. He had instances of passenger guards whose day's work extended over fourteen hours thirty-five minutes, thirteen hours fifty-five minutes, fourteen hours, and thirteen hours twenty-five minutes. He hoped that the President of the Board of Trade would not accept any excuse from the railway companies that the men had intervals of rest of one, two, or three hours during the day. Admitting that, he contended that a man might be sent out to work at six o'clock in the morning who did not get home until twelve o'clock at night, and the railway company might say that he had not worked more than twelve hours in the day. Such hours were, he held, excessive, and he hoped that the Board of Trade would insist that twelve hours should be the maximum, intervals or no intervals. As to the Great

Northern Railway Company, the view of the men, so a correspondent informed him, was—

> "That in spite of the Board of Trade's repeated request for the abolition of excessive hours, little or no notice is taken of them. Indeed, it seemed as if the company answered the Board of Trade by putting their finger to their nose."

On the morning of Wednesday, 27th February, a shunter named William Green was fatally injured at Doncaster while performing his duty. Green went to work at six o'clock p.m., and had been on duty eight hours and forty-five minutes when the accident happened, and he would have worked for twelve hours had it not been for his misfortune. The whole of the shunters at Doncaster were eight-hours men, yet the greater portion of them had worked twelve hours a day for the last ten months, and if any of them complained they were bluntly told that if they did not like it they could leave it. The shunters' duties were more dangerous than those of any other men except the seamen; and was it not monstrous that any railway company should work such men for twelve hours a day? It might be said that the company paid the men for the four extra hours they worked, but that did not relieve them of the extra strain which rendered them unfit and liable to accident. He hoped the President of the Board of Trade would inquire into the hours worked by the shunters at Doncaster, and go fully into the question as to whether it had not been the habitual practice of the company to work the men for twelve hours a day. It was said that the railway companies never interfered with their men when they made complaints; but he knew better. There was just a bit of a hint by a foreman to some of the men that somebody had sent a complaint to Bell, who had sent it on to the Board of Trade; and if it were known who that man was it would not be well for him. In fact, the men were consequently afraid of lodging complaints. On some of the Irish and Scottish railways things were just as bad. For instance, they had the Donegal Railway, which had been amalgamated with the Great Northern Railway of Ireland and the Midland Railway of England. Since those latter companies had taken over the Donegal Railway several porters had been dismissed in order, as the officials said, to reduce the staff. The consequence was that the guards had to do the porters' work and had their own to do as well. The guards had also to do shunters' work as well as their own work, and the staff at the station had to load and unload goods, as all the trains were mixed trains. The hours that were worked on that railway without Sunday work were often fourteen hours and twenty-five minutes, or twelve hours and forty-five minutes per day. There was a difficulty in getting the men to lodge complaints about long hours for fear of dismissal. The North-Western was frequently held up as a railway that tried to prevent long hours, but the returns sent to the Board of Trade were not always accurate. From the Blue-book issued last July he was satisfied that some of them were "cooked." He had proofs that the returns of this country were inaccurate, and he had produced to the predecessor of the right hon. Gentleman at the Board of Trade proof that the returns which the men were called upon to make were inaccurate, and that when they had been fifteen hours on duty they had to return twelve. For instance, a London and North-Western goods guard signed on duty at 4.50 p.m. on the 23rd of January and was in charge of a train until 5.35 a.m. the next day; he was thus twelve hours and forty-five minutes on duty. According to the rules of the London and North-Western the man had to make out a long hour return. The next day he was met by his inspector, and such pressure was brought to bear upon him that he falsified his return and booked in the depot as off duty at 4.50 a.m., when he did not arrive till 5.35. The extra forty-five minutes was allowed to go on his next period of duty, so that he was not deprived of any pay, but the extra time was carried forward to his next week's pay. That was contrary to the orders of the London and North-Western, and was done to screen the local officials and so that it should not appear in the return to the Board of Trade there had been any excessive duty. He thought that something should be done to put an end to this extraordinary state of things. What was the advantage of the Hours Act of 1893 if it was not put in force more rapidly and made operative at a greater speed than at present? He would give some instances. The first complaint in regard to the hours of locomotive men at St. Margaret's Depot, North British Railway, was lodged on the 30th of October, 1905. A further complaint was sent on the 14th of December, 1905, and six reminders were sent. There was a further complaint on the 19th of October, 1906, and a reminder on the 29th January, 1907. After seventeen months, however, the case was still in hand. The first complaint as to the hours of goods guards at Annesley on the Great Central Railway was lodged on 27th November, 1905. Three reminders were sent, and the Board replied to the effect that the company were constructing large and costly relief works which would enable them to reduce the hours. That was on 22nd August, 1906. Further complaint was made on October 16th, 1906, and a reminder sent 2nd January, 1907. The Board replied on 5th January, 1907, that they were still in communication with the Railway Company. The case was, therefore, after fifteen months still in hand. In regard to the long hours of goods guards at Wakefield on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, the first complaint was lodged 27th February, 1905, and a reminder was sent on 27th May, 1905. The Board replied in June, 1905, that the company were making arrangements to reduce the hours. That was not done, and a further complaint was lodged on 5th April, 1906. Three reminders had been sent since, and on 6th February, 1907, the Board replied "that they were still in communication with the Railway Company." The long hours of goods guards at Masborough and Rotherham on the Midland Railway were first complained of on 1st December, 1904. Six further complaints or reminders were sent. The replies of the company and the returns submitted not being satisfactory, the Board said they had pressed the company to take more efficient measures and had called for a further return. That was on 17th February, 1906. Further complaints were made on 27th March, 1906, and 26th April. 1906. The Board replied that the company were constructing costly relief works which would enable them to reduce the hours. There was a further complaint on 28th August, 1906, and a reminder was sent on 12th November, 1906. There were also further complaints on 20th and 30th November, 1906. The case, however, was not yet settled after two years. There was also the case of the locomotive men at Sheffield on the Midland Railway. The date at which that was taken up to the Board of Trade was 27th September, 1904. Reminders were sent on 30th December, 1904, and 4th April, 1905. The Board replied that the company's returns were such that they were advised that no further action was necessary. That taking place on 27th May, 1905, further complaint was made on 14th September, 11th October, 18th October, 27th October, and 11th November, 1905. The Board asked that the Midland Railway cases should be allowed to stand over for six months, as the company were carrying out works which would put an end to long hours. The date of that request was 5th May, 1906, and a further reminder was sent on 22nd August and 12th November, 1906. There were also further complaints upon 20th and 30th November, in the same year. The case, however, was still in hand after two years and five months. He thought he had made out a striking case for the President of the Board of Trade to do something to remedy this kind of evil. There could be no excuse for the railway companies. Certainly he could not excuse them. He knew what they were. They would not accept any excuse from their own servants, and if they chose to make one the reply was, "It must be done." Could not the Board of Trade adopt the same tone as the railway companies took with their employees and say, "This must be stopped"? He said that in the interest of the men themselves as well as of the travelling public. Although some of the men might like to work overtime, if they were prepared to sacrifice their own lives they must not be permitted to jeopardise the lives of the travelling public. It was illegal for a man to attempt to commit suicide, and if he was arrested for an attempt to do so he was penalised; and if these men desired practically to commit suicide by working overtime they must not be allowed to endanger the lives of others. In his experience as a railway man, possibly he had worked as long hours as were now worked, but it must be remembered that in the days of which he spoke the duties of railway men were not anything like so hard as they were now. The duties of railway servants were becoming more and more arduous every year, and they had a right to press the President of the Board of Trade to put an end to the present intolerable state of affairs. The President of the Board of Trade should instruct his inspectors to look through the books in which the servants of the company signed "on" and "off" If he had not the power to do that he must obtain it, because until he obtained and used that power the Act of 1893 would not be effective. The inspectors of the Home Office visited factories and workshops, and if they had a right to go into a factory or workshop and see the way in which the work was carried on, was there any reason under the sun why the same system should not be carried out in regard to railways? There were able men at the Board of Trade, and he had confidence in the officials of that Department, and he was confident that the present state of things would be remedied if they had greater powers conferred upon them than they had at present. If the Act was in effective, would the right hon. Gentleman take steps to amend it? If it was effective would he see that the Department performed its duty in administering it? When a Board of Trade inquiry into the cause of an accident was held, and he sent one of the officials of his organisation to report to him, the railway company officials objected to the man's being present. He contended, however, that he had as much right to see that the men in the organisation with which he was connected were represented as the railway companies had to see that their officials were represented. He thought that the power to order this should also be obtained by the Board. Until the powers which he had indicated were obtained he was sure that the Hours Act of 1893 would fail to be effective. No one could stand up in his place in the House and justify the long series of accidents which were detailed by his hon. friend who moved the Resolution and the long hours to which he had alluded, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman in his reply would let them know what he intended to do. Railway men would never complain of working overtime during a fog or snow storm, and he had given instructions in his office that no complaints of any excessive hours of work during such times should be sent on to the Board of Trade. What they asked the right hon. Gentleman to do was to call for special Returns for these particular centres and not to allow the Return to be thrown over the whole system. It was no relief to Sheffield, where they were working fifteen hours a day, to know that the men in London were not working more than twelve. If the President of the Board of Trade would call for Returns for the month of January, he would find that there had been undue overtime, although the weather was normal. He hoped they had made the case sufficiently strong to make the right hon. Gentleman accept the Resolution and to act upon it. If the right hon. Gentleman found at a later stage of the session or early in next that he had to take stronger measures the House would not hesitate to support him. He had much pleasure in seconding the Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House disapproves of engine drivers, firemen, guards, and other classes of Railway employees being compelled to be on duty during excessive hours and being allowed but short intervals of rest, and urges upon the Government the necessity of applying more vigorously The Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, and, if this is inefficient, to prepare an Amendment to the Act."—(*Mr. William Edwin Harvey.*)

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that, as a Member representing one of the divisions of Sheffield to which reference had been made, he rose at this early stage of the debate to put the case on behalf of the railway companies. He welcomed the observations of his hon. friend the Member for Derby, whom they had always found a most reasonable man, and he might say the same of the hon. Member for North-East Derbyshire, who, from the evidence of his quality given in his speech that evening, they might hope was only at the beginning of a distinguished Parliamentary career. The hon. Member had, however, slipped out a remark which gave the House the key of the whole position. This could not be a case, as suggested by the hon. Member, of grasping shareholders wishing to wring dividends out of the health and safety of their employees, nor could it be said that overtime and long hours were to the interest of the companies themselves, because all overtime had to be paid for at increased rates. It was no part of his business to defend the President of the Board of Trade. A great deal of the argument of the hon. Members who moved and seconded the Motion had been directed to showing that the Board of Trade had, at all events in appearance, been supine during the time the right hon. Gentleman had been responsible for its administration. Before passing fresh legislation, the House ought to see whether the powers conferred by the Act of 1893 had been exhausted. In the thirteen years that had elapsed since that Act was passed there had been only 823 complaints in all, or an average of sixty-three complaints a year, and there had been no appeal to the Railway Commissioners. That was not much, but it was evidence, at any rate, on the part of a great number of the men, that there was not that exceeding discontent which was alleged as the foundation of the Resolution. In a Motion of this kind it must be shown that there was danger either to the travelling public or to the men themselves, or that the long hours were injurious to their health. He would be the last to deny that any general system of excessive hours must be a source of danger to the men; but the acute and ingenious gentlemen on the other side had not been able to show that where accidents occurred there was a recurring persistence of evidence of long hours. Had it been possible to show that, the hon. Members who moved and seconded the Motion would have been quick to do so, so that the conclusion could not be resisted that there was a deadly and sinister connection between the two. As regarded the danger to the men, he knew that the employment of railway men was dangerous, and he had always been anxious to draw attention to the fact that the Report of the Commission upon Automatic Couplings was not quite fair in this regard. But he did not deny that long hours might be a source of danger to the men, and any enlightened board of directors, and any executive officer acting under them, would know that their true interests lay in restricting long hours as far as possible, but he did not know that evidence could be brought forward showing that the system of long hours made the men generally inferior in health to the rest of the nation. The question was one of remedy. Railway directors did not deny that a remedy ought to be found, if possible; and they desired to go hand in hand with hon. Gentlemen in trying to find a remedy. Of course, there was a profound difference between different classes of railway employees, and it was that which differentiated this from all other labour questions. So far as the signalmen and those engaged at fixed posts were concerned, the percentage of those employed over the standard period of twelve hours came out at a fraction incredibly small. As regarded the men who had to move with the traffic, and had to go long distances from their homes, would it make things better if the House enacted a fixed period of hours? The railway companies would have to employ more men, but it did not follow that they would be able to get them at the necessary time for the necessary relief. And that was the crux of the whole question. The real question for the House to consider was whether the railway companies were doing all that could be legitimately expected of them to bring their works and their equipments up to the highest possible standard. Competent men could not be obtained except by training them. During the last autumn and winter, as everyone knew, there had been a very great increase of trade, especially in the export of coal. That had caused a great congestion of traffic on railways. It was true that the more wealthy and powerful companies were better able to cope with this difficulty; but all railway companies were not wealthy, and he felt sure that the right hon. Gentleman would not be too quick to put upon them the large cost of employing larger staffs, which would make it more difficult for them to carry out the construction of relief sidings, to put down double lines, and other works. It stood to reason that if the companies were compelled to incur large additional staff expenditure, those works would be longer in being carried out. The Great Central Railway Company, with which he was connected, was doing much to improve the condition of the men, and in regard to the special matters to which the hon. Member for Derby had referred certainly he would make it his business to inquire. In reference to the accommodation at Grimsby, he asked the House to receive the statement with caution, and he would make it his business to see whether the causes were permanent and chronic, whether the state of things was remediable by the exercise of greater care, or whether it was a case of exceptional pressure which might be due to particular causes. As to emergency men, of course, the man who was imperfectly trained ought not to be paid so high a wage as the man perfectly trained. The hon. Gentleman had been able to quote only one instance where an untrained man had been employed to do work on which a highly trained man ought to be employed.

*Mr. BELL said he had quoted the instance as an illustration of emergency men incompetent to take charge of a train.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY said they could not always get trained men when the emergency arose, and they could not prevent emergencies arising more quickly than had been expected. So much for his particular company. After all what was the real remedy? It was not that which the hon. Gentleman proposed, the issue of schedules fixing the hours of work. What they wanted to secure was not cure but prevention; they wanted on behalf of the companies progressiveness of organisation, by which alone they could get the necessary works, sidings, double lines, concentration yards, shunting yards, and all the things requisite to get through congestion of traffic. In the company with which he was best acquainted, and he was quite sure it was the same in the case of others, heavy works were in progress, and they hoped to be able to bring them into operation in the course of a few years; and he was perfectly certain that those works would result in a much greater improvement than would arise from any number of schedules which Parliament might issue. They could make maximum hours in factories, mines, and workshops, where the men were all concentrated, but on railways the employees were often in distant places, and there were perpetually disturbing circumstances which made it impossible to arrive at that fixed standard of employment which would entirely get rid of the evil complained of. Nature would inevitably defeat all such arrangements in the case of railways. The hon. Gentleman who seconded the Motion said he would be the last to complain of what happened in snowstorms, in fogs, or in exceptional conditions. That was very good-natured of him, and no more than one would have expected of him; at the same time the Board of Trade Returns made no difference in respect of cases of that kind. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Motion had made no allowance for exceptional cases.

Mr. W. HARVEY said he had taken the month of July, when there were no storms.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY said he could not admit that the month of July was specially favourable to the companies, for though mineral traffic was not so great during that month, it was still large, and had to be conducted in the midst of a very busy passenger traffic, which was always exceedingly heavy in the summer months. He ventured to suggest to the House that not only were efforts being made to cope with what they all admitted to be an evil, but, whatever the effect of those efforts, it must necessarily be the purpose and desire of the companies to avoid what must be to them a source of additional expense. The remedies which the companies were applying were not such as could operate suddenly or even quickly; still, their good effect was beginning to be apparent in some cases, and where it had not begun to be apparent, it had been delayed by causes beyond their control, but which they hoped would be eventually remedied.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) desired to associate himself with his right hon. friend in saying that the railway companies did not desire that their men should work excessive hours. He did not claim for the companies any particularly kindly feeling; perhaps some hon. Members would not believe him if he did. But he put it on a much more solid basis, namely, that it did not pay the companies to employ men on overtime, for which a higher rate was paid than for ordinary time, with consequent loss to the companies. July was not a favourable month to the railway companies, for in that month a large number of excursions were run; there was a large holiday traffic, and though the mineral traffic was not so great as in winter, yet it was considerable, and was thrown out of gear by the excursion traffic. It was impossible to work it, with all the extra holiday traffic going on, in quite as efficient a manner as at other times. Though July was not marked by snowstorms and fogs, yet, for the reason he had given, it was not a favourable month for the railway companies. The hon. Member for North East Derbyshire had asked for a Return for January, when there were considerable snowstorms; at least they had them in his part of the world. He had not been able quite to reconcile that part of the hon. Member's speech with his previous statement that he was desirous to relieve the railway companies from any obligation during the time of snowstorms or fogs. The hon. Member had referred to the Grantham accident, which took place on the railway in which he was interested. The Grantham accident had nothing to do with excessive hours, and he gave that, not on his own authority, but on that of the inspector appointed by the Board of Trade, who made a minute examination into the cause of the accident. None were more anxious to ascertain the cause than the directors, who regretted that the accident had taken place, because for thirteen years there had been no such serious occurrence on the Great Northern Railway, and it was a great blow to them. He might point out that railway directors did take interest and pride in their work, and their desire was to secure an efficient service for the public and to treat their servants in a proper manner. He would ask the mover and the seconder of the Motion whether they could point to a single accident, where anyone of the public was injured, that was due to excessive hours of labour. He did not believe they could point to a single such case. He would also point out that the number of hours of labour which had been given were in nearly every case the hours of guards or goods drivers, who, it must be remembered, were sent long distances, and frequently spent a large part of the thirteen hours they worked off duty, at some station, waiting to bring their train back. It would be impossible to work the railways on a system under which a twelve hours' maximum day from the time of booking on to the time of booking off was rigorously enforced. Delay was sometimes unavoidable, from storm and other inevitable causes, and the men had to be kept a little late. Was it suggested that if any of these men were kept over twelve hours the President of the Board of Trade should put certain Members of this House in the Clock Tower? Last year there were only fifty-six complaints from railway men, and fifteen of them were dismissed by the Board of Trade as being unfounded, and the remainder were investigated and adjusted. He would, no doubt, be told that the men were afraid to come forward, though personally he was not aware that that was so. But if any case of a man's being dismissed for bringing a complaint were alleged, he was certain any board of directors would be only too glad to look into it. What more could they do?

MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): They would discharge him for something else.

SIR F. BANBURY replied that if hon. Members proceeded on the assumption that railway directors would not listen to reason and were prepared to do everything that was wrong, he failed to see the purpose of that debate, unless it was followed up by a proposal that the State should take over the railways. Apparently they were getting at the real object. The railway companies had to pay heavy compensation when men were injured or killed, and their object was, naturally, to avoid accidents. He believed that, on the whole, the men were satisfied with the conditions of their labour. In the face of what had been said by hon. Members opposite, it was rather remarkable that the number of people desirous of entering railway employment, which was alleged to be so dangerous and unpleasant, was so enormous. Personally he received many applications from persons who were desirous of finding employment on the railway; it seemed to him to be one of the most popular kinds of employment in the country. He did not deny that there was a certain number of cases where the hours worked appeared to be rather long, but it should be remembered that in such cases they were not hours of continuous work A considerable amount of time was spent doing nothing, and a certain amount of time was occupied in taking food. He was not defending long hours, and the railway companies did not want them, but what he wished to point out was that the very long hours which had been spoken of were not so bad as they might appear to be on the face of the statements made by hon. Members. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution gave, he believed, the number of instances, not the number of men. That made a great difference. It must further be borne in mind that in by far the larger proportion of the cases in which more than twelve hours were worked, the excess was limited to one hour. The fact should not be overlooked that a railway company had to report to the Board of Trade if a man worked only five minutes over twelve hours. The hon. Member for Derby had spoken of the "cooking" of the returns made to the Board of Trade, and said that the railway company which his right hon. friend near him represented was rather celebrated for that sort of thing.

*MR. BELL said he did not make the deliberate charge that that particular company was celebrated for that kind of thing. All he did was to quote an instance.

SIR F. BANBURY said that was a rather serious charge to make. He did not believe any railway company would deliberately set about to send a false return to the President of the Board of Trade. There was no doubt that the question of capital largely entered into the matter, especially in the cases of those railway companies which were not so wealthy as others. If railway companies were to get more lines to work the traffic easily, it was absolutely necessary that they should get the capital to make the lines. Every step which the House of Commons had taken during the last year and a half had been such as to prevent people putting their money in railways. If railway companies had to pay more money, to shorten hours of work, and to give traders lower rates and better facilities, it was only to be expected that the money needed for making improvements on some of the poorer railways would not be obtained. He asked hon. Members below the gangway to consider whether there was not something in what he was saying. It was a matter on which he had some knowledge. It was not to the pecuniary advantage of railway companies that their employees should work long hours, and it was to be hoped that the hours of labour would diminish. It must be remembered, however, that in the management of railways they could never attain the time when a fixed number of hours would be worked, and that there must be overtime occasionally. The object of the railway companies was to render overtime as little necessary as possible.

*MR. WARDLE (Stockport) moved an Amendment to leave out all the words after "Government," and to substitute words declaring the necessity of amending the Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, providing for a limitation of the hours to be worked on any one day, and for a compulsory notification of all exceptions thereto by the companies themselves, thus removing the onus of complaint from the men. In his opinion, and in the opinion of those whom he represented, the Act of 1893 had proved inefficient to deal with the great and acknowledged evil of long hours. In 1904 the Annual Congress of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants passed a Resolution declaring that the Act should be so amended as to compel railway companies to make returns of all hours worked over twelve. In 1906 the following Resolution was adopted—

> "The Congress hopes the Board of Trade will give greater attention to this question in the interest of the men employed and the travelling public, and further requests the President of the Board of Trade to take the necessary steps to strengthen the Act of 1893, in order that the Board may be able to enforce their recommendations."

If there was time he could quote other statements to show that in the opinion of those concerned the Act of 1893 was not sufficient. This was not a new matter; it had been before the House and the country for many years. The Act had been only partially successful. The evil was very great, though, according to the Returns issued from time to time, it was less than before the passing of the Act. He had examined the evidence given before the Select Committee which sat in 1891–2, prior to the passing of the Act, and he found that the very same companies who were sinners in respect of long hours now were the sinners then. The improvements which had been effected had been very small indeed in all those cases. The individual cases which had been quoted this evening were just as bad as the individual cases with respect to which evidence was given before the Committee. It was no consolation to work these cases out in averages. The fact remained that in July, 1906, there were 95,293 individual cases in which men had actually worked over twelve hours. That had been going on all the time, and he submitted that the time had come when it ought not to be allowed, and when some drastic measures should be taken to bring it to an end. He would like to point out what had been done in foreign countries. In Australia there was an eight hours day, which applied to the running staff as well as to the stationary staff. An Act was passed in Switzerland in 1890, which fixed the maximum at twelve hours with one hour's rest for meals; and in France a regulation was enforced that the men should work ten hours and have ten hours rest, and that if a man worked twelve hours a notice should be posted in the depot shewing that he had done so. The limitations of the hours of railway servants in the United States had been anxiously considered at Washington, and a Bill had been adopted limiting the hours of those employed on railways, which was a very decided advance on labour legislation previously passed in the United States. President Roosevelt, in his message, drew attention to that fact, and said that the ultimate ideal was that the hours should be reduced to eight. This country ought not to lag behind other countries in the matter. There was not the slightest difficulty, in his opinion, in fixing a maximum day even for the running staff; and he thought that the maximum should be less than twelve hours because in the altered circumstances in these days a twelve hours day was too long. Much water had flowed under the bridges since the Act of 1893 was passed, and if twelve hours was considered long enough then by the Committee which sat on that Bill, ten hours was certainly long enough for a maximum day at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Hallam Division had said that the railway companies wanted competent men. Why did not they keep the competent men when they had them? It could be proved from the figures issued by the Board of Trade that in certain classes, particularly drivers, firemen, and guards, the men were very much less numerous than they were five years ago, because of the policy of the railway companies in increasing the size of the trains. He hoped that the President of the Board of Trade would listen to no plea as to difficulties or dividends. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War said the other day that there was as much superstition in regard to certain things connected with the Army as there was in theology, and so there was as much superstition in regard to the maximum day for railway employees. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants asked for an eight hours day for drivers and guards, and a maximum of ten for other servants, and he believed that by proper organisation the difficulties in conceding these hours would disappear altogether. He had much pleasure in moving the Amendment standing in his name.

*MR. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne) seconded the Amendment. As an old railway servant, and one who had worked for a quarter of a century on the East Coast Railways, he ventured to say that this was a practical question, and if there was willingness on the part of the railway companies, or even of the Board of Trade, if they had the necessary powers, the hours of railway servants could, except in extraordinary circumstances, be kept within reasonable limits. The Act of 1893 had in its operations proved a failure, except for the first two or three years after it was passed. Things were now worse than they were five years ago. What was the good of passing a Resolution of this character, a pious Motion, asking the Board of Trade to administer the Act to the full extent when five years after commencing to raise this question in Parliament, and call for Returns under the Act of 1889 the position was really worse than before? In September last he had put a question to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade in regard to the drivers and fireman employed at the Midland Depot at Leeds, and recently he had put another question in regard to the same matter. The result was that a fortnight afterwards there was some mitigation of the long hours worked, but soon there was a reversion to the same old system. A week ago there were cases in that particular centre, where men were working thirteen, fourteen and even as much as thirty hours at a stretch, while other men were at home twenty-four hours at a stretch waiting for work. The right hon. Member for Sheffield had asked why it was that the Board of Trade had never gone to the Railway and Canal Commission, but his answer was because the provision in the Act of 1893 for bringing the Railway Companies before the Railway and Canal Commissioners was practically useless. As one of the Commissioners on Accidents, to which reference had been made, he could say that a railway manager had challenged the Board of Trade to take them before the Railway and Canal Commissioners. Where could they find an employee of a railway company who would go up and give evidence against his own railway managers before the Railway and Canal Commissioners? It was not fair to ask men in such a position to do that. The time had come when the hours should be regulated by Parliament, instead of under the Hours Act of 1893, the Board of Trade calling for a Return or a schedule in all cases where twelve hours a day was exceeded. Owing to the different circumstances that now existed, and the much greater mental and physical strain of railway work as compared with fourteen or fifteen years ago, ten hours should be the limit over which they should not be allowed to work the men. Moreover, might he call the attention of the House and of the right hon. Gentleman to the fact that when the Hours Act was before the House in 1893, Sir John Gorst then moved an Amendment that in all cases the hours of signalmen should be limited to eight and the extreme limit for any railwayman to work should be only ten? Seventy-one hon. Members recorded their votes for that Amendment, and yet they were further from that position today than they were at that time. Might he also point out that a Royal Commission had declared that it was the duty of the State to intervene for the regulation of railway work as a dangerous employment? That Commission, which included two representatives appointed by the Railway Association of this country, showed that there was great loss of life amongst the shunters, the goods guards, and the brakesmen employed, and speaking from the practical experience gained by one who had served for over a quarter of a century in this class of service, he insisted upon the necessity for legislation, and a consolidation of existing acts dealing with this most important question. He had great pleasure in seconding the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 4, to leave out from the word 'Government,' to the end of the Question, and to add the words 'the necessity of amending The Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, providing for a limitation of the hours to be worked on any one day, and for a compulsory notification of all exceptions thereto by the companies themselves, thus removing the onus of complaint from the men.'"—(*Mr. Wardle.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs) said that all who had listened to the debate would recognise the moderation and fairness with which the representatives of the railwaymen had presented their case. Last year the companies whose conduct was arraigned did not enter an appearance at all; but this time something had been heard from the companies against whom complaint was levelled. He did not quite agree that the existing Acts had been failures. They had produced a considerable reduction in the hours of work. Taking the man who worked thirteen hours a day, the percentage of 1891 had been reduced in the case of the Great Eastern Railway from 20 to 7·9; and in the case of the Great Northern, from 26 to 7·7. In all the companies the reduction had been substantial; so that the existing Acts had made a substantial contribution to the solution of the question, though he did not say that they were not open to amendment. That, he thought, would afford an answer to the hon. Gentleman who, speaking on behalf of the Great Northern Railway, said that the reduction of the hours of labour would prevent investors from putting their capital into railway companies and thus prevent the railway companies from giving increased facilities.

SIR F. BANBURY said he did not want to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but he must point out that he did not limit his observations to the hours of labour. He said that if the railway companies were to be attacked on all sides to pay more wages, to pay more rates, and to give more facilities and to carry goods at lower charges, there would be nothing left for the shareholders, and the railway companies would not be able to get any additional capital to make improvements.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE did not consider the point a sound one. The only excuse he could put forward on behalf of the railway companies because there had been a setback in the hours of labour was that the road was so crowded, especially in Lancashire and in the coal districts, that they could not cope with the traffic. The point he wished to make was that the reduction from the high percentages he had quoted to the present percentages had not really affected dividends at all. On the contrary, the railway directors who had spoken in that debate had very properly said it was not to the interest of the railway company to employ the men overtime, and therefore it was not a question of dividend. It was to the interest, as far as he could see, of the railway company, of the workmen, and certainly of the travelling public, that they should reduce the hours of labour so as to bring them within the compass of human endurance. It was all a question of method. Up to this year there had been a gradual reduction of hours, but, as far as three companies more particularly were concerned—the Great Central, the Midland, and the Lancashire and Yorkshire — there had been, in some respects, a considerable setback during the year which ended in March. Some of the returns he had received from the companies themselves were perfectly appalling. No one dreamed of defending them. The directors of the companies did not defend them, nor did the managers, some of whom he had seen. They simply said they regretted them, and that they wished they could get out of them. Here was one of the returns for November. On Friday a fireman at Leeds, on the Midland Railway, worked fourteen hours and forty-five minutes. The very next day, without any interval, he worked twenty hours. That was something which no railway company ought to tolerate on its system. It was a danger to the travelling public, it was gross oppression, it was the worst form of slavery. There were several cases of that kind where men worked on consecutive days thirteen or fourteen hours, and that for about five days in the week, and human nature could not stand it. The excuse given by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was that their sidings were choked, every wagon being full and every train occupied, and, as far as that company was concerned, there had never been anything in the history of the company to equal it. He hoped that would be noted by the advocates of tariff reform. They told him they had been so busy with the export trade in coal that they could not find men, that engine drivers could not be made under six years, and that they had brought men from Ireland to help them.

*MR. BELL regretted having to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but he pointed out that the hon. Gentleman who spoke last said they had thousands they could not take on.

SIR F. BANBURY: I did not say engine drivers.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The same story came from the Midland, the Great Northern, and the Great Central Railway Companies. And the prospect was that trade was likely to improve, so that it cast upon the companies the obligation of meeting this contingency. He did not accept the suggestion of his hon. friend that the Grantham and Arbroath accidents were attributable to long hours of labour. They had gone into the matter very carefully, and could not find any ground for that statement.

MR. W. HARVEY said he never made the statement that those accidents were attributable to long hours; he said there was no evidence that they were not.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was afraid his hon. friend's advocacy had rather run away with him. On the contrary, there was any amount of evidence that long hours had nothing to do with them. The hours of labour were not so excessive in regard to express trains, or cases of that kind. The complaint as to excessive hours was in regard to enginemen and firemen on goods trains, and so far there was no evidence that serious accidents to goods trains could be traced to excessive hours. His hon. friend had asked him what could be done with a view to finding a remedy. He would say frankly that during the past year he had made a really honest effort to apply the means within his power. He felt that the railway companies should have a full and free opportunity of working the Act without any extra pressure being brought to bear upon them. He wanted to give them that opportunity by calling their attention to all these cases which had occurred in order to see whether they were prepared voluntarily to cope with the situation. He did not think they could complain that he had been unfair. There had not been a single case to which he had called their attention which anyone would not have been compelled to admit. He would like to say in that respect that cases were brought before him by the hon. Member for Derbyshire and the hon. Member for Newcastle which he did not think, in the main, the companies had been able to dispose of, and he regretted to say that he did not think that they had really coped with the difficulty in the way that they ought to have done. He was told that although there might have been a shortage of drivers, the companies could have promoted men from the next rank, and filled the vacancies which were made in that next rank; they could have promoted men from the rank next beneath it, and by that means they could have dealt with emergencies. It was very much a question of the wages they were prepared to pay. The forty or fifty engine drivers who came from Ireland to this country was an illustration of that point. The moment they came over they found better wages in other trades and they left the railway company. So it was very largely a question of wages. When they found in Lancashire and Yorkshire high wages being given, men were tempted, of course, to go to those industries where such wages were to be obtained; the railway companies were left unless they were prepared to pay adequate wages to the men who came to them. In every other trade or business, when there was a great boom, and there was considerable pressure, wages rose. He did not think the railway companies tried to meet emergencies by doing the same thing in order to induce men to enter their employment. With regard to what he could do, all he could promise at the present moment was this. He could not accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Stockport. He did not think the time was ripe for legislation fixing the hours of labour. He thought that upon the whole the powers given by the two Acts were adequate to cope with the difficulty. At any rate the Department would make an effort to exhaust every power given to it by the Act of 1893. He proposed to adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member for Derby by demanding Returns for special districts. If necessary there would be local inspection and inquiry in order to search down to the very bottom of the facts of the case. When the power under the existing Acts was exhausted, it would be time enough to ask the House of Commons for fresh powers. At the present moment he was not prepared to recommend the introduction of fresh legislation to fix definitely the hours of labour in the railway industry. They ought to proceed on the lines on which they had more or less proceeded up to the present, and, accepting the words of the Motion, apply the existing Acts still more vigorously. It was complained that if the companies were penalised by legislation, capital would be frightened. But if these complaints against the railway companies eventually materialised in legislation, the companies would have only themselves to blame. It was not a case here and there; the cases were numerous. He had a book full of them from one particular district. If those cases continued, and there was no real effort on the part of the railway directors to remedy them, the directors only would be to blame if the public insisted that the matter should be set right by legislation. The same remark applied to railway charges and rates. There was very grave and general discontent amongst the trading community, and he would appeal to railway directors that if they wished to avoid drastic legislation with regard to granting facilities, with regard to owners' risk, and with regard to the hours of labour of their workmen, their only way to do so was by undertaking to remedy those grievances themselves. No one could do it more effectively than they could, because they had the whole of the facts in their charge. It was very largely a question of management, and he left the railway directors to undertake this business before another year came round and they had again to face a similar Motion.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said the right hon. Gentleman had referred to the extraordinary prosperity of the English railway companies at the present time, but would he tell them of any single railway company whose stock during the last year had not gone down? He would like an answer to that.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: That is owing to the dearness of money.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD said he would not attempt to argue the point. His object was to refer to the accusation made by the hon. Member for Derby against the London and North Western Company. It was very unlikely that he had made it without evidence, but he hoped the hon. Gentleman would communicate with him and give him an opportunity of replying.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 205; Noes. 50. (Division List No. 38.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn. Sir Alex. F
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A, Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Billson, Alfred
Boulton, A. C. F.
Boyle, Sir Edward
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A,
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Cameron, Robert
Carlile, E. Hildred
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Clarke, C. Goddard
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Coats, Sir T. Glen (Renfrew, W.)
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, William Randal
Crosfield, A. H.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Frank (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Esslemont, George Birnie
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Finch Rt. Hon. George H.
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Colonel Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)

Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson, E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Kitson, Rt. Hon. Sir James
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs)
Macnamara, D. Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major B.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launcest'n
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathianiel
Mond, A.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Chas. N. (Doncaster)
Nield, Herbert
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Price, C. E. (Edinburgh, Central
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E.
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richardson, A.
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne)
Sears, J. E.
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Starkey, John R.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thornton, Percy M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Waterlow, D. S.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hn. C. H. W. (Hull, W.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes,—Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Bell.

NOES.

Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Bottomley, Horatio
Bowerman, C. W.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duckworth, James
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Hunt, Rowland
Jenkins, J.
Jowett, F. W.
Kelley, George D.
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lehmann, R. C.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Richards, T. F. (Wolverham'tn
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Shackleton, David James
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Snowden, P.
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thorne, William
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walsh, Stephen
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Wardle and Mr. Hudson.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House disapproves of engine drivers, firemen, guards, and other classes of railway employees being compelled to be on duty during excessive hours and being allowed but short intervals of rest, and urges upon the Government the necessity of applying more vigorously The Railway Regulation (Hours of Labour) Act, 1893, and, if this is inefficient, to prepare an Amendment to the Act."

SUPPLY, [26TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Postponed Proceeding on Amendment to Second Resolution reported from the Committee of Supply.

CLASS VII.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out '£10,000,' and insert '£9,000.'"

Question again proposed, "That '£10,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

And, it being after Eleven of the Clock, and objection being taken to further Proceeding, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House do now adjourn." (*Mr. Whiteley.*)

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury whether it was the intention of the Government to suspend the eleven o'clock rule to-morrow. A definite pledge had been given by the Prime Minister that if they did not divide the House on the Motion that the Speaker leave the chair, they would have another opportunity of discussing Vote A and Vote 1 of the Navy Estimates. If the rule was suspended for that purpose he had no objection whatever, but if it was to be suspended to enable the Report of Vote A and Vote 1 of the Army Estimates to be taken in addition, he did not think that would be fair to the House. After all, this was a session of economy and efficiency, and he would like some pledge that the rule would not be suspended for any other purpose than a fair and full discussion of the Navy Estimates to-morrow.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY), said the right hon. Gentleman had no right or title to ask for any pledge. The only pledge which had been given was that there should be time for a full discussion of Votes A and 1 of the Navy Estimates, and he was perfectly willing, if they got those two Votes by eleven o'clock, that they should not suspend the rule at all.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD said if it was understood that only Votes A and 1 of the Navy Estimates were to be taken to-morrow, he quite agreed that the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule was unnecessary.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) complained of the absence of the Ministerial representatives of the Army and Navy, the Leader of the House, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Adjourned at a quarter after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 7th March, 1907.

The Right Hon. Sir Richard Henn Collins, late Master of the Rolls, having been appointed a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary under the provisions of the Appellate Jurisdiction Act, 1876, with the dignity of a Baron for life, by the style and title of Baron Collins of Kensington, in the county of London, was (in the usual manner) introduced.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with: General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Limited; Renfrewshire Upper District (Eastwood and Mearns) Water Electric Supply Corporation; Royal Bank of Scotland; Glasgow Corporation; Aberdeen Corporation; Electric Supply Corporation (No. 2).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Standing Orders Committee—Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Barry Railway Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that the powers to take the waters of the streams known as the Rhydwaedlyd, the Nant-cwm-Nofydd, and the Nant-y-Briwnant be struck out of the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Rawtenstall Corporation Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 10, 11, and 11A be struck out of the Bill: And

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways Bill [H.L] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill be allowed to proceed.

Read, and agreed to.

Buckhaven Dock Bill [H.L.]. Presented; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London Bill [H.L.]. Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Barnsley, Wombwell, and Wath Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill; Boston Spa Gas Bill; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill; Simon-Carves Bye-Product Coke Oven Construction and Working Company, Limited—(Petition for Bill). The Order of yesterday referring the Examiners' certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee, discharged; and the said certificates referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Thursday next.

Kendal Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª (according to order), and committed; The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Sutton Coldfield Rectory Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª (according to order), and committed.

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª (according to order), and committed.

Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill no parties having appeared in opposition thereto; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The orders made on the 27th of February and Thursday last discharged and Bill committed for Tuesday next.

Galwey's Divorce Bill [H.L.]; Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PETITION.

ALLEYNES GRAMMAR SCHOOL (UTTOXETER).

Petition of Thomas Allen, praying that leave may be granted to Mr. A. F. Loch, Charity Commissioner, to circulate among members of the Legislature, the Press, and teachers' associations, copies of his

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by a Member.

confidential report on Alleynes Grammar School, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIAL CONFERENCE, 1907.

Correspondence relating to the Colonial Conference, 1907 (in continuation of [Cd. 3337], February 1907).

AUSTRALIA.

Customs Tariff (British Preference), 1906, Revised Act, with a despatch from the Secretary of State thereon.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table

STANDING COMMITTEE.

Report from the Committee of Selection for the Standing Committee that they have added the Lord Saye and Sele to the Standing Committee; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

COMPANIES BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1900. Was presented by the Lord Granard (*E. Granard*); read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next. (No. 10.)

JUDICATURE BILL [H.L.].

Debate on the Motion for the Second Reading resumed (according to order).

Lord ASHBOURNE: My Lord, when the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack moved the Second Reading of this Bill he stated to your Lordships the grounds upon which he thought it necessary to present such a proposal to Parliament, and he supported his case by statements and figures which your Lordships heard with every possible attention and respect. It was most courteous of the noble and learned Lord to adjourn the debate, and I think it was also a prudent thing to do, because the Bill had been circulated only a very short time and its provisions were not generally realised. This is a Bill dealing with a matter of first-class legal administration. It is desirable to carry judicial opinion with its passing, and it is obviously a Bill in connection with which there should not be the slightest appearance of hurry. As the Lord Chancellor indicated, something is needed. It is not a satisfactory state of affairs that in such a great Court as the Appeal Court of this country there should be a mass of arrears which the Judges, although they have worked as hard as possible, have not been able to keep down. The Court of Appeal cannot be spoken of with too great consideration in view of its extreme importance. If there is a strong Appeal Court it satisfies suitors and checks appeals coming to your Lordships' House; it is, therefore, absolutely necessary, no matter what the state of business may be, that nothing should be done to weaken its authority or lessen the respect given to its decisions.

Since the Judicature Act the Court of Appeal has been composed of six Lords—Justices of high character and great ability, who sit in two Courts of three Judges each. In addition there is power for the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls, and the President of the Probate Court to sit in the Court of Appeal, but it is impossible for the holders of those great judicial offices to give much assistance to the Court of Appeal. I venture to think it is most unreasonable to expect the Lord Chancellor of the day, with his enormous and responsible duties, to take part in the sittings of the Court of Appeal. Yet my noble and learned friend Lord Halsbury and the noble and learned Lord who now sits upon the Woolsack have been obliged, notwithstanding the strain of their great duties, to take part in the work of the Court of Appeal. I maintain that that is neither satisfactory nor desirable, and I am sure there is no one who would not welcome any Bill that enabled that great public and personal inconvenience to be avoided. I am quite aware that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack is the last man in the world who would ever complain of work or falter in the performance of any duty coming within his office; but it is not reasonable to expect him to also take part in the sitting of the Court of Appeal. The same remark applies to the other distinguished Judges who are entitled to sit in the Court of

Appeal but who are not Lords Justices. The Lord Chief Justice presides over a great Department. He has immense legal duties, and it is not reasonable that he should leave the work of his Division to take part in that of the Court of Appeal. The same remark again applies to the President of the Probate Court. Everyone can recognise these difficulties, but that does not advance us very far in the ascertainment of a remedy. The Lords Justices admittedly work hard, and those who are entitled to sit in the Court of Appeal do all they can to assist the Lords Justices; but there is, notwithstanding, a large list of arrears. The remedy proposed in this Bill is that of reducing the number of Lords Justices in each Court, with the consent of the Lord Chancellor, from three to two. That is a very serious proposal. The fact that the consent of the Lord Chancellor is required is an important limitation, but I should be glad if the noble and learned Lord would take an opportunity of saying exactly what is meant by that.

Speaking generally and broadly, it is better to have the Appellate Court composed of three Judges rather than two. With two Judges and a difference of opinion arising, obviously the judgment of the Court must be less satisfactory than if the Court were constituted of the uneven number. The result will be an increasing number of appeals to your Lordships' House. I can speak with more knowledge of Ireland than of England. In Ireland the Appellate Court is composed of three Judges, and sometimes more, and that, I believe, accounts largely for the fact that there are very few Irish appeals to this House. I am aware that the object is to avoid further pecuniary demands upon the Treasury for an additional Judge or Judges, but I am doubtful whether that necessity can be avoided. I think it is reasonable to shrink from the appointment of new Judges until it is proved to be an absolute necessity. I am not sure that if this Bill passes in its present form it will give satisfaction to the public. The late Lord Chancellor a few years ago introduced a Bill which became an Act giving power, where the parties agreed, for cases to be heard by two instead of three Judges. I admit that it is difficult to get suitors, who are at arm's length, to agree to anything. At any rate, I do not think the records show that that Act has been largely availed of. This is a matter which requires much thought, and I hope the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack will not unduly hurry the Bill, but will allow time for a thorough examination and criticism of it.

Lord JAMES of HEREFORD: My Lords, my noble and learned friend who has just sat down has very fairly, I think, reviewed the position in regard to this Bill There is no doubt that the evil of congestion in the Court of Appeal exists to an extent which has become almost a scandal. The present state of things is a denial of the promise made long ago that in this country there should be neither refusal nor delay of justice. There is now a stay in the administration of justice by virtue of the delay that occurs in the Court of Appeal. It is due, however, to the Judges of that Court to say that the existence of the evil is not attributable to them. They work assiduously but are unable to cope with the accumulating arrears.

If we admit that this evil does exist, we have to ask ourselves what is the remedy. It has not been found possible to suggest a remedy which will meet with the approval of every one. The only other practical suggestion is the creation of new Judges. That may be attractive and alluring to some who speak without knowledge; but I certainly think that our profession would protest as much as they could against an undue creation of Judges, which would, of necessity, weaken the standard of knowledge and ability on the Bench. But something has to be done, and I venture very respectfully to commend the Lord Chancellor's proposition now before the House. The proposal in this Bill seems to me to be the best thing that can be done. In the days of men like Lord Justice Turner the Court of Appeal consisted of two Judges, and not one word of complaint was heard of the administration of justice by that Court.

I admit the inconvenience that may arise where the two Judges hearing a case may differ, but it is not an inconvenience which has been found in our experience to be great. I believe that there might be some classification of cases into those which could be taken by two Judges and those which were of such importance that they should be taken by three Judges. I do not know whether classification would suffice. There is another view, that the Lord Chancellor should take the responsibility of making out the list of the three-Judge cases and the two-Judge cases. I know the difficulty of that. I do not see how my noble and learned friend could obtain the information in all cases to enable him to differentiate, but by consultation with the Judges of the Court of Appeal such a list could be drawn up. I am quite sure that this is a good practical measure, which will remedy the evil that has to be met and do nothing to deteriorate the high character of our Judges.

*LORD ALVERSTONE: My Lords, your Lordships will naturally expect that, holding the office of Lord Chief Justice of England, I should, as far as possible, place before the House the result of any experience I have had that may bear on this question. I desire to say at once that it is quite impossible for me to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, because I believe that something must be done, and that no other prompt remedy could be applied. With things as they stand, I believe that my noble and learned friend on the Woolsack could not do other than ask that, as a temporary measure, the Court of Appeal should be empowered to sit with two Judges.

But it is because I have the greatest desire to improve in every way the administration of justice that I venture to ask your Lordships to look at this matter from a broader standpoint. It is from that point of view that I ask your Lordships to allow me to speak for a few minutes. I appeal to the Lord Chancellor, whom every member of our profession rejoices to see occupying his present high position, to look at the matter from the broader aspect. My noble and learned friend will have the support of every Member of your Lordship's House in any proposal he may make for the improvement of the administration of justice; His Majesty's Judges will be unreservedly at his service, and he may count on their active support in the preparation of any measure with that object; and in the other House he has an unparalleled majority. I know from communications made to me by colleagues of my noble and learned friend in the Government that they would welcome an improvement in the administration of the law. Therefore, I ask my noble and learned friend, in the early days of what may be a great Chancellorship, to look at this matter from a broader standpoint.

This is no new question to me. I thought over it during the years I was Attorney-General, and I communicated with Lord Halsbury on the subject at that time and since I have been Lord Chief Justice. The real difficulty is this—I do not care whether you are dealing with three Courts of two Judges or two Courts of three Judges—it is really impossible to have a Court sitting every day throughout the whole legal year when, as under present arrangements, you are using the full number of your Judges. I know that Lords Justices have not infrequently sat when they were not fit to do so. I refer to men like Lord Davey, whose loss we so deeply deplore, and Lord Lindley, who is fortunately with us. Why did they do it? Because they knew that if they did not sit two Lords Justices would be rendered idle. Two tribunals of three Judges cannot be worked with a Master of the Rolls and five Lords Justices.

It may be said: "There are three *ex-officio* Judges; why cannot they help?" Let us take my noble and learned friend the Lord Chancellor. I endorse everything that Lord Ashbourne said regarding my noble and learned friend, and I wish to bear witness to the extraordinary efforts made by the Lord Chancellor to carry on the work in the Court of appeal. I like the pluck, to use the familiar English word, he has shown; but it proved too great a strain, and I believe the noble and learned Lord did considerable harm to his health by sitting in the Court of Appeal when he was new to other duties which in themselves were very heavy. I protest against the Lord Chancellor's having to go into the Court of Appeal merely to take the place of any Lord Justice who may be ill. There may, of course, be great cases now and then, for the trial of which he ought to sit; but to expect him to take the place of one of the regular Lords Justices who is temporarily absent is putting a strain on the Lord Chancellor which never ought to be put.

I will refer for a moment to my own position. Although my duties are nothing like those of the Lord Chancellor, still they are very arduous, and it dislocates the whole work of the King's Bench Division when I am called upon to supply deficiencies in the Court of Appeal, for the whole of the judicial time of the Judges—and we have no reserve or spare Judge—is mapped out for the performance of their regular duties. Therefore, willing as I am to go into the Court of Appeal when I can, it is unreasonable to rely on the Lord Chief Justice for this work. To a very great extent the same observations apply to the President of the Probate Division. The Admiralty Court is always full of work, and it is one of those Courts where prompt justice is essential. This Bill, of course, should pass; but the Lord Chancellor must face the necessity of appointing at least one additional Lord Justice and one more Judge of the King's Bench Division. After six years experience of the very anxious work of arranging the work of the King's Bench Division, I am satisfied that this must be done. It may be said, "Rearrange the circuits." It is possible, if the House of Commons would face the grouping of certain counties for circuit purposes, that a slight saving of time might be effected, equivalent, perhaps, to three or four weeks of the time of one Judge, but no real relief to the congestion which we are discussing will be afforded by rearrangement of circuits. The work on circuit, as it is, means no light strain, and is overtaken often when there is a heavy criminal list or a heavy civil list by sitting on four or five days till seven o'clock in the evening and by considerable hurrying and straining to get it done. There is nothing worse than hurry or appearance of hurry in judicial business. The country owes it to His Majesty's Judges, if they command the confidence of the country, that their judicial work should be done in circumstances and in an atmosphere in which it can be done with comfort to themselves, and in which they can give the best of their powers to the suitors whose causes they have to decide. Experience is against a Court of Appeal with two Judges. Moreover, this is an evil which cannot be dealt with effectively by a temporary measure. I would, therefore, make an earnest appeal to the Government and to my noble friend on the Woolsack to look at the question from a broad standpoint, and, even if some increase in expenditure is involved, to see that the Judiciary is so constituted as to avoid friction, prevent the reaccumulation of arrears, and enable the Judges to devote the best of their powers to their duties under circumstances of no undue strain.

*LORD AMPTHILL: My Lords, it may seem presumptuous for a lay Member to intervene in a discussion of this kind, but I hold that this question is one on which every Member of your Lordships' House is competent to form an opinion. I do not think that on a question of this kind we ought to be overawed by the weight of legal opinion or silenced by the great respect we feel for the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack and other noble and learned Lords in this House. The question is a very simple one. The work of the Court of Appeal is congested, and to the ordinary man the obvious remedy is to increase the number of Judges. Indeed, I do not think that anybody could have listened to the weighty and eloquent speeches we have just heard without coming to the conclusion that the noble and learned Lords who have spoken are convinced that the real remedy, the proper and the only remedy, is an increase in the number of Lords Justices.

The remedy which is proposed by this Bill reminds me very much of the action recently taken by the Secretary of State for War. The right hon. Gentleman wished to increase the efficiency of the Artillery. He found a system prevailing under which there were six divisions, consisting of three batteries each. What did he do? He wished to give an appearance of greater numbers, and he therefore constituted nine divisions of two batteries each. Three times six are eighteen and twice nine are eighteen; the numbers remain exactly the same, although we have the specious appearance of nine divisions instead of six. The effect of this Bill is precisely the same. The country wants more Judges, and is offered three Courts with two Judges instead of two Courts with three. Two-Judge Courts cannot possibly be effective, for when a division of opinion occurs suitors to obtain a decision will have to carry their cases to the House of Lords with largely increased costs.

The noble and learned Lords who have spoken, if I may say so with all respect, were animated by a prejudice which must have been apparent to those who listened to them. It was asserted by Lord James of Hereford that in the legal profession there was strong objection to the creation of new Judges. I can quite understand that among noble and learned Lords who have attained the position they now occupy there may be a natural and perfectly legitimate objection to what may be called a cheapening of the position of Judges of Appeal; but I venture to doubt if the profession generally share that objection. I should like, with all deference, to ask the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack how far the opinion of the profession has been taken in regard to the matter. I believe that the profession as a whole object very strongly to the principle of this Bill, and I associate myself with the hope which has been expressed that the stages of the Bill will not be hurried through, in order that professional opinion may be ascertained and given the weight it is entitled to. I do trust that noble Lords will consider the question on those broad principles which were so clearly indicated by the last speaker. There could not have been a stronger argument in favour of the creation of new Judges than that which the Lord Chief Justice gave us, and it is because I am convinced upon common-sense grounds that that is the right solution of the existing difficulty that I shall, with all due respect to noble and learned Lords, record my vote against the Second Reading of this Bill.

EARL RUSSELL: My Lords, much has been said of a very interesting character about the subject of this Bill from the point of view of the Bench. I desire, with your Lordships' permission, to say a word on the matter from the point of view of the litigant. I venture to think that litigants who have to go to the Court of Appeal will regard the provisions of this Bill with something like dismay. It is not a very expensive process to obtain a judgment of the Court of Appeal on a matter which has been heard in a Court of first instance, and when that judgment is the unanimous decision of three Judges the case is not usually carried further, except where there is plenty of money, and the Court of Appeal is only intended to be a stepping-stone to the House of Lords. An appeal to this House is a serious and expensive matter which litigants would wish to avoid. With two Judges sitting as a Court of Appeal there must sometimes be disagreement, and where that disagreement occurs, the litigant will feel that he has got no further than the Court of first instance carried him, and in a matter of importance there will be no resource but to appeal to the House of Lords. That is a prospect which I do not think litigants would welcome. The unanimous opinion of two Judges would not carry the weight of a Court of three Judges. For these reasons I hope the remedy which is now proposed will be regarded as of a temporary character. It is the case that litigants have had the opportunity of having their cases tried before two Judges, but I do not think they have availed themselves of this power to any extent.

LORD ALVERSTONE: Twice.

EARL RUSSELL: Litigants before the Court of Appeal are advised by eminent counsel, who would agree to a hearing by two Judges if that could be at all satisfactory. It is suggested that the obvious difficulty of this proposal may be modified by a classification of cases. I am afraid classification will not meet the difficulty, for it is just the smaller cases where suitors desire decisions which will obviate appeal to this House. It is impossible for me, in face of the views which have been expressed, to oppose the Second Reading, but I do venture before I sit down to associate myself with the observation of the Lord Chief Justice that the obvious and only remedy is not to try and work the Court with absolutely no margin of judicial strength. It is clear that Judges, who, of necessity, must be advanced in years, cannot be expected to be able to sit day by day in perfect health. There must occasionally be a gap which has to be filled, and the proper remedy is the appointment of additional Judges. The amount involved is a very small one, and I hope the matter will receive the attention of His Majesty's Government.

LORD COLERIDGE: My Lords, the noble and learned Lord who spoke first this evening stated that there was great objection to a two-Judge Court. The noble and learned Lord forgets that a large part of the work of the Court of

Appeal is already done, and satisfactorily done, by two Judges.

LORD ASHBOURNE: Only interlocutory appeals.

LORD COLERIDGE: I agree. The Court of Appeal deals with two sets of appeals—appeals from Judges sitting in Chambers and from Judges after trial by jury or without jury. It seems to me that a Court of Appeal consisting of two Judges would be quite authoritative in regard to the reversing of the decision of a single Judge, but in regard to appeals from Divisional Courts, which are Courts of great weight, and in which three Judges have been accustomed to sit, I can quite conceive that an Appeal Court of two Judges would be unsatisfactory. Therefore, if in practice the Lord Chancellor were to limit the operation of the Bill to those appeals which are not from the Divisional Courts, that would go a long way towards remedying the defects which now exist. It is only from a desire that the decision of the Divisional Courts should not be upset by an inferior number of Judges that I have risen to make this suggestion.

*LORD COLLINS: My Lords, I hope it will not be deemed impertinence on my part if, having been only one hour in this House, I venture to address you; but it does so happen that I have spent the last ten years of my life in the Court of Appeal, and can therefore claim to know something of its working. The proposal before your Lordships has reference to the Court of Appeal only, and I would venture to claim for that Court that it does stand, for reasons peculiar to itself, upon a totally different footing from ordinary Courts brought together by the casual introduction of Judges who do not permanently sit together. The Court of Appeal derives its strength from the fact that the same Judges continually sit together. They change Courts, but they have all become accustomed to sit with each other. They meet every day in the common room, and after a time became so completely in accord with each other that they constitute the strongest Court possible; for it is not the weight of the individuals that makes the strength of the Court—it is the fact that they are able to act together and in complete sympathy. I premise that because we are dealing, not with the ordinary case of two Judges unaccustomed to sit together being asked to do so, but with the case of two Judges drawn from a body each of whom is embued with the traditions of the whole and accustomed to sit together. That introduces, in my view, a radical difference.

The great point made against this Bill is the possibility of a difference. It is assumed that difference is the probability and not the exception. Therefore I think it is important, speaking from the inside and knowing what goes on, that I should bring before the House the real facts. I have sat for something like ten years in the Court of Appeal, and for the last five years two Judges of that Court sitting together have been dealing with interlocutory matters some of which have been of the highest importance, such cases numbering perhaps 400 more or less in the course of the year, though I cannot pretend to vouch for the figure. I have been searching my memory, but I do not remember during the whole period I have been in the Court of Appeal more than two instances in which there has been a difference of opinion between two Judges sitting alone. Difference of opinion between members of the Court of Appeal, whether sitting with three Judges or with two, are so rare as scarcely to be worth considering. I sat for some seven years in the Court of Appeal with Lord Justice Stirling, and I believe that I differed from him only once. I believe I was wrong, but it was in an attempt to follow the decision of your Lordships' House. With Lord Justice Romer I sat for a year or two longer, and I cannot recall more than two or three differences of opinion during the whole of that period. Therefore, I submit that the question of difference, which is the most formidable ground of objection to this Bill, may be treated as non-existent.

Another strong argument in favour of this Bill is that, as the Judges are accustomed to sit together, each finds out in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour whether there is any likelihood of a difference of opinion arising. If there is, they can adjourn the case to the following day, meanwhile asking another Judge to come in. That has happened in my case on the only two occasions where I remember a difference showing itself in the Court of Appeal between two Judges sitting alone. We were able to call upon another Judge to come in, without any extra expense to the suitors and without any real trouble or annoyance in the matter. In these circumstances I think it would be an enormous boon that the Court of Appeal should be able to deal automatically with the growth of work, for the number of cases that come up for decision are just up to the level of the Court's capacity when its members are in full enjoyment of health during the whole of the legal year. When a member of the Court is away ill the whole of the business is thrown out of gear, and whenever arrears begin to run up they tend to multiply, for people then enter cases simply with a view of postponing the evil day. If power is entrusted to the Court of Appeal to sit in three divisions it would not be like the case of the Artillery referred to by my noble friend Lord Ampthill, but the real addition of another Court for the time being.

I certainly should not suggest that a tribunal of three is not better than a tribunal of two, but I think the matter might be entrusted to the discretion of the Master of the Rolls coupled with the consent of the Lord Chancellor. Personally, I would leave anything to the discretion of the present Master of the Rolls. I have sat with him for many years and there is no man in England on whose discretion I could more rely. This is the only risk: Would this power, if given, be used fairly and with proper discretion? If you can trust the persons to whom you give it—in this case the Lord Chancellor and the Master of the Rolls—then the mischief is annulled. The cases in which three Judges of the Court below sit together are few. The vast majority of appeals are from a single Judge. Those conversant with the lists can always pick out cases that are of more than ordinary difficulty, and the other cases could properly be heard by two Judges, with the power, where probability of difference showed itself, which would be once in a thousand times, of inviting the aid of another Judge on the spot. It would be an immense boon to get rid of the incubus of the large body of arrears, and if these were once disposed of I think that the Court of Appeal sitting in three Courts for probably a fortnight in the whole year would enable the accumulation to be nipped in the bud and kept down. I therefore most heartily support the proposal which the Lord Chancellor has embodied in this Bill.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, I am sure it has been a very great advantage that this debate has been adjourned, for we have had a very interesting discussion on a subject of real importance. I will state again, in the shortest manner possible, what I conceive to be the main grounds for this measure. First of all, the Court of Appeal under normal conditions is liable to be crippled by accident from day to day through the illness of one of its six permanent members. This deficiency cannot be supplied by help from any of the extra Judges. The Lord Chancellor has quite enough to do, the Lord Chief Justice has his own Courts to attend to, and so has the President of the Probate Division. The result is that the whole system is dislocated if one Judge becomes suddenly ill; and I have known of cases where Judges of the Court of Appeal have come to work when they were not in a fit state in order to prevent the machinery of the Court from being interrupted.

In the second place, and partly by reason of that circumstance, there has grown up a body of arrears which is a burden and a standing incubus on the Court of Appeal. The House has heard what the late Master of the Rolls—whose appearance among us I welcome with pleasure, and I am quite certain that your Lordships will realise what an immense strength he will be to the House before long—has said on the subject. It must be a perpetual strain on the Court of Appeal to find that it has a body of arrears numbering 300 cases each time it begins a term. It is impossible for men to go on working under pressure when they feel that they have these arrears ahead of them; and the state of things at present is that even if you have the Judges in full health they can but keep up to the current business and do little or nothing to remove the arrears. The result is that the arrears are always with them, and they are not tending to decrease. Within the last twelve months I have myself, with the Lord Chief Justice and the President of the Probate Division, sat for a month in order to get rid of the burden of arrears hanging round the neck of the Court; but I cannot undertake to continue that work, neither can the Lord Chief Justice, and the President of the Probate Division cannot be expected to do more.

Both of these evils are temporary in their character. The proposal of this Bill is essentially a temporary measure, necessitated from time to time by emergencies; and I stated this to be the case when I introduced the Bill. What are the remedies proposed? It is suggested that there should be an increase in the number of Judges in the Court of Appeal. But this step is not necessary for an occasional emergency. It is not necessary for the present purpose to do more than provide for occasional emergency or exceptional circumstances.

The objection as to differences of opinion arising between two Judges is one which is always held up as a bugbear to terrify people. The first answer to that is that these differences very rarely happen, and if they do, the difficulty can be remedied after half-an-hour's discussion by invoking the assistance of a third Judge. The second answer is that it is not proposed that two Judges should sit as a regular thing, but only in appropriate cases, as, for example, where a minor question or a short point is involved which may safely be disposed of by two Judges, instead of by three.

Further, it must be remembered that you have to deal, in the first place, with the Lord Chancellor and also with the Master of the Rolls, who will really be the governing person in these matters. Personally, I am inclined to leave the matter at large, but if in Committee any noble Lord proposes to prescribe in the Bill how a great officer of State should discharge his duty I shall give such an Amendment my best consideration, without the smallest jealousy or apprehension.

I am asked by Lord Ampthill how this Bill is regarded by the legal profession. I am sorry to say I have received from my brethren at the Bar a resolution of the Bar Committee, very kindly expressed towards myself, but disapproving of the proposal in the Bill; but they give no reasons, they suggest no alternative and they do not dispute the necessity. I have also received from the Incorporated Law Society a resolution to the effect that they sympathise with me, but that they do not like the proposal. They, too, do not dispute the necessity or prescribe any other remedy. For my part, I am a law reformer—and my predecessor, Lord Halsbury, was a very considerable law reformer—and I am most anxious to see the Courts of this country made efficient business instruments, so that they should be able to say to suitors, if you come to-morrow, we will hear you the day after.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I do not anticipate that any of my noble friends sitting near me will desire to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has said enough to convince the House that the congestion of business in the Court of Appeal is at this moment intolerable, and that some measure is absolutely necessary in order to relieve that congestion. But I should be wanting in sincerity if I told the noble and learned Lord that his speech had entirely dispelled the doubts with which some of us look upon these proposals. If my doubts are diminished, they are diminished not by what is contained in the Bill, but by the very straightforward explanation of it which the noble and learned Lord has given us. What I am afraid of is that the public—perhaps I may say the ill-informed public—will regard this measure with a good deal of suspicion. After all, we have to consider three sets of people, the Bench, the members of the legal profession, and, last but not least, the public who represent the suitors. We have heard speeches from noble and learned Judges, and from Peers who represent the legal profession, but I think my noble friend Lord Ampthill is the only member who has ventured to say a word on behalf of the public, whose interests are very much concerned.

A NOBLE LORD: Lord Russell.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: But Lord Russell may be said to represent the legal profession.

EARL RUSSELL: Yes, but I tried to say a word on behalf of the public.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I am afraid I must say that I share the views which Lord Ampthill has expressed. I believe that what the public desire is a strong Court of Appeal, and that, to the mind of the public, a Court consisting of three Judges will always appear stronger than a Court composed of only two. In Scotland, I believe, they have no fewer than four Judges in the Appeal Court. I am, however, not a little comforted by the distinct assurance which was given to us by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack that he regarded this Bill as a measure designed to meet an ephemeral and temporary condition of things. He told us that it should be applied with the greatest caution, and only in cases where the circumstances were appropriate and where an arrangement of the kind was clearly demanded by the circumstances. That is an assurance which I think should weigh with your Lordships' House. Whether it would be possible further to reassure the public by adding words to the Bill at a future stage I will not take upon myself to say. My own feeling is that, if we are to rely upon anything, we should rely rather upon the high character and reputation of the great judicial officers who will interpret this Bill than upon any words we might attempt to graft into the clauses of the Bill. With these few observations I for one consent to the Second Reading.

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: My Lords, I rise to call attention to the Public Health Acts, 1875–1890, and to the large number of Acts passed in recent sessions, and of Bills pending in the present session, to amend or extend those Acts or otherwise to confer sanitary powers on certain local authorities; and to ask His Majesty's Government whether they do not consider that the time has arrived for the extension of the Public Health Acts.

This subject is perhaps not of such great importance as that which your Lordships have just been discussing, but it is, nevertheless, one of vast importance. In the year 1875 there was a consolidating Public Health Act passed which comprised a very large number of clauses, all designed to give powers to local authorities which chose to adopt the Act. Short of the adoption of the clauses of that Act it was necessary to obtain clauses in special Acts affecting special localities. Since 1875 there have been a number of Public Health Acts passed dealing with water, interment, sewers, the confirmation of by-laws, infectious diseases, and buildings and streets; and in the year 1890 another consolidating Act was passed to which certain clauses were added, and which is the last word that has been spoken on this subject. Since 1890 there have been no clauses dealing with police and sanitary matters with the exception of those which deal with isolation hospitals and infectious diseases. The result has been that a number of matters have come under the notice of local authorities, who have desired to avail themselves of further powers than those given to them by the general law. As a consequence, every year fresh clauses are introduced in private Bills which might, I think, very well be embodied in a general Public Health Act applicable to such parts of the country as chose to adopt it.

In the years 1903–1906, there has been in no fewer than forty-six Bills a clause dealing with deficiency of new buildings, in thirty-six Bills a clause dealing with trees overhanging streets, in forty Bills a clause prohibiting persons suffering from infectious disease carrying on any business, and in forty Bills a clause regulating the manufacture and sale of ice-creams. What does that mean? It means a very large expenditure on the part of the public authorities concerned, who have to go to the expense of promoting private Bills in order to get these powers. I shall perhaps startle your Lordships when I show you the Bill I have in my hand which is now before your Lordships' House. It contains 290 clauses. What the expense of this Bill is I should be afraid to say; but I will say this, that, if a Public Health Act were to be passed now, at least one-third, if not one-half, of the clauses in this Bill would be rendered unnecessary. I have taken pains to look into the cost of these Bills, and I find that from one-third to one-half is rendered necessary by the adoption of these clauses. Last session a Bill came under my notice the cost of which was £3,000, and of that sum at least £1,000, and probably more, was due to the necessity of providing these police and sanitary clauses.

I have asked in my Question whether His Majesty's Government do not consider that the time has arrived for the extension of the Public Health Act. I am not going to lay myself open to the reply which it is likely I should receive, that the Government have a very large number of measures to bring before Parliament and are unable for want of time to add to that number. I would venture to ask whether, if a Bill for the purpose is brought in by a private member, either in your Lordships' House or in the House of Commons, the Government will do what they can to assist its reference to a Joint Committee of the two Houses, consisting of those who have been accustomed to deal with what are known as police and sanitary clauses. There are Chairmen of Committees in your Lordships' House and gentlemen in the House of Commons who are eminently qualified to deal with this subject. I venture to think that a Bill of this kind, affecting as it does public health and public convenience, and affecting the expenditure of local bodies, now reaching a limit which ought not to be exceeded, would be absolutely non-contentious; and having passed the scrutiny of such a Committee I think it might become law without much discussion, and it would be a great boon to a large number of local authorities who at this moment are obliged to incur the heavy expenditure to which I have referred.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, the noble Lord has stated his case with such clearness and conciseness, and with such an amount of practical knowledge, that it will hardly be necessary for me to detain the House for more than a few moments in replying. As the noble Earl correctly observed, one public Act would obviate the necessity for the promotion of a large number of private Bills by local authorities; and he certainly startled the House by the production of the enormous Bill of 290 clauses. The proposal of the noble Earl would, no doubt, be a distinct saving of money to the ratepayers, and if it were carried out other parts of England would be able to share in the blessings of the reduction in rates which we are promised in London. It would also save a great deal of time and trouble on the part of Parliament and especially on the part of the Lord Chairman himself. The noble Earl acknowledged that the question was not absolutely free from difficulty, and he mentioned a Bill which was brought forward in the House of Commons last year. I have no doubt he referred to Sir James Woodhouse's Bill. That Bill consisted of 101 clauses and dealt with a great variety of matters, including streets, buildings, sewers, infectious diseases, milk, common lodging houses, and recreation grounds. Therefore I think the House will agree that before making clauses in local Acts part of the general law, it is necessary that very careful consideration should be given to them to see how far they can be regarded as proper for general application. I do not think my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board will put forward any excuse founded on the congestion of public business for not assisting a Bill dealing with this matter, for he quite realises the necessity of giving additional powers to local authorities. My right hon. friend requests me to say that he has a very warm sympathy with the object the noble Earl has in view, but at present he is unable to give any direct pledge on the subject, though he is giving it careful consideration with a view to action being taken. I hope this reply will not be altogether unsatisfactory to the noble Earl.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: I understand the noble Lord to say that the President of the Local Government Board can give no pledge with regard to bringing in a measure. But that was not the question I asked. My question was whether, if a measure were brought in, His Majesty's Government would give it their sympathy and do what they could to get it referred to a Joint Committee with a view to getting it through Parliament this session.

EARL CARRINGTON: That is a question which, individually, I am not able to answer.

HOUSE OF LORDS (REFORM) BILL [H.L.]

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH: My Lords, I should like to ask the noble Lord opposite, Lord Newton, when he proposes to move the Second Reading of his Bill for the reform of the House. The Second Reading is appointed for the 12th inst., and it would be convenient if the noble Lord would say whether he intends to take it on that day.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, as far as I am concerned, I should prefer to proceed with the least possible delay, but I am extremely anxious to cause as little irritation as possible, and it has been mentioned to me by influential Members of the House that it would be inconvenient to take the Bill so soon. I therefore proposed to put it down after Easter, towards the end of April.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 7th March, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Reservation, for His Majesty's pleasure, of Bills passed by the Legislatures of the States forming part of the Commonwealth of Australia and to confirm certain Acts passed by those Legislatures." [Australian States Constitution Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to dissolve the marriage of Charles Edward Galwey, a Captain in the Royal Irish Regiment, with Annie Louisa Galwey, his now wife, and to enable him to marry again; and for other purposes." [Galwey's Divorce Bill [Lords.]

And, also a Bill, intituled, "An Act to dissolve the marriage of Lida Eleanor Purcell Fitz Gerald with Gerald Purcell Fitz Gerald, her present husband, and to enable her to marry again; and for other purposes." [Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [Lords.]

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 63 has been complied with, viz.:—Grays and Tilbury Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petition for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—Leith Harbour and Docks Bill.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the following Bills, introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with, viz.:—General Accident, Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Limited; Renfrewshire Upper District (Eastwood and Mearns) Water; Royal Bank of Scotland; Glasgow Corporation; Aberdeen Corporation; Electric Supply Corporation (No. 2).

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 66 NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 66 has not been complied with, viz :—Channel Tunnel Railway Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill.—" To empower the Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway Company to construct new railways in the County of Monmouth, and to authorise the company to raise additional capital; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Boston Spa Gas Bill.—" To incorporate and confer powers upon the Boston Spa Gas Company," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Galwey's Divorce Bill [Lords]; Fitz Gerald's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour—from Aldwarke; Brayton Knowe; Halesowen; Hill and Cakemore; Lye; Moresby; Rockingham; Soothill Wood; Two Gates; and, West Kiveton Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (METRIC SYSTEM) BILL.

Petition from Walsall, against; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour—from Gravesend and Northfleet; and Isle of Wight; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIAL CONFERENCE, 1907.

Copy presented, of correspondence relating to the Colonial Conference, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AUSTRALIA.

Copy presented, of the Customs Tariff (British Preference), 1906, Reserved Act, with a Despatch from the Secretary of State thereon [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH (REGULATIONS AS TO FOOD) BILL.

Copy ordered, " of Enactments referred to in the Bill."—(*Mr. Burns.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 70.]

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND).

Copy ordered, " of Account of receipts and payments of the Accountant-General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland in respect of funds of suitors in the said Court, including therein funds to the credit of lunacy accounts in the year to the 30th day of September, 1906, together with a statement of liabilities and assets and particulars of securities in Court on the 30th day of September, 1906."—(*Mr. Runciman.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Volunteer Officers' Liabilities.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if Volunteer officers have incurred on behalf of their battalions any liabilities in addition to those mentioned in the Supplementary Estimates; and, if so, what scheme he proposes to meet these liabilities.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The Public Works Loan Board mortgages represent only the indebtedness of those corps who have borrowed from the Commissioners money to meet the cost of drill halls and ranges. There are other liabilities incurred by commanding officers of Volunteer corps. The Volunteer corps who are transferred to the Territorial Army may have other liabilities. As to these, it would be wholly premature to attempt to forecast the mode of dealing with these cases, which may present varying details.

Assets of Volunteer Corps.

MR. COCHRANE: To ask the Secretary of State for War, what will become of the assets and funds which certain Volunteer corps have accumulated by good management and economy.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The hon. Member presumably refers to the Volunteer corps who will be transferred to the territorial force. I hope to be able to deal with the point he raises when the Bill comes up for Second Reading.

Lieutenant-Colonels' Increased Pay.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the Secretary of State for War what sum has been provided during the forthcoming financial year wherewith to increase the pay of lieutenant-colonels commanding regiments of cavalry and battalions of infantry.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A sum of money has been taken in the Estimates to meet this service. I am in communication with the Treasury as to the rate of increase per arm, and I am not yet able to state the exact figures.

Garrison Artillery Reduction.

MR. PIKE PEASE: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will publish the general information acquired by the joint Naval and Military Committee, resulting in his proposal to effect considerable reductions in garrison artillery at Home and Abroad; and what these net reductions will amount to during the next financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It would certainly not be in the interests of the public service to publish the information referred to in the Question. The reduction in cost of personnel in 1907–8, consequent upon the recommendations of the Committee, amounts to about £100,000.

Lord Esher's Memorandum.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will now lay upon the Table the Memorandum, approved by himself and signed by Lord Esher, which was submitted, by order of the Secretary of State, to the committee formed to report upon the organisation of the Territorial Army.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am not certain as to the document to which the right hon. Gentleman refers, but, as I have already explained to the House, I do not propose to publish documents which were simply intended to elicit provisional expressions of opinion for my personal use.

Lord Esher's Committee.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the question of the abolition of the Militia and the reduction of the pay of the Imperial Yeomanry were discussed by the committee presided over by Lord Esher; and, if so, whether the Committee reported in favour of either of these changes.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) For the reasons indicated in my Answer to the last Question I do not propose to furnish information about the views of the Committee.

Cost of Organising the New Territorial Army.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether any expenditure will be incurred during the coming financial year in respect of organising and preparing for the proposed new Territorial Army.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) As stated in my Memorandum on the Estimates for 1907–8, it has not been considered necessary to make any extensive provision in them for expenditure on the new scheme; but I hope to see a good deal of preliminary work accomplished before the close of the financial year, and provision has been made for some expenditure.

Submarines and the Hague Conference.

MR. L. HASLAM (Monmouth Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will consider the desirability of placing before the Hague Conference, with the view of limiting danger to life during times of peace and of expense of armaments, the question whether the use of submarines should be discontinued.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Grey.*) It would not be reasonable to expect the Powers at the Hague Conference to entertain such a proposal.

Old Age Pensions Commission.

MR. L. HASLAM: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the introduction of measures dealing with the subject of old age pensions, he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of the Old Age Pensions Commission, which forms a portion of C.O. 13,921, received 21st April, 1906, in which the systems in practice in Australia and New Zealand are fully described and unanimous recommendations made.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Yes, Sir, the Report will be laid.

Free Church of Scotland General Assembly.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): To ask the Lord Advocate what provision is being made for a place of meeting for the general assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. Thomas Shaw.*) This inquiry should be addressed to the Secretary of the Church Commission. That Commission is vested with full statutory power in the allocation of property formerly belonging to the Free Church.

South Leith Free Church.

MR. REMNANT: To ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been called to the position of the South Leith Free Church congregation in Leith, who are compelled to worship in and pay rent for a hall which is very unsuitable for their requirements, while there are seven old Free Churches in the hands of the United Free Church, the minister of one of which has expressed his willingness to resign; and will he say what action he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Thomas Shaw.*) I have no right to take action in regard to the matters referred to in the inquiry, and I am not to be held as assenting to the accuracy of the representations made in the earlier portion of the Question.

Absinthe.

MR. A. C. CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he proposes to take any steps for the protection of this country from the increased importation of absinthe which may follow the prohibition of its manufacture and sale in Belgium and the Canton de Vaud in Switzerland, and the efforts which are now being made for similar legislation in France.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I confess I am unable to see why the prohibition of the manufacture of absinthe in certain foreign countries should involve any danger of increase in the importation of that liquor into this country.

Local Government Expenditure.

MR. R. PEARCE (Staffordshire, Leek): To ask the President of the Local Government Board what were the amounts provided in the United Kingdom in each of the years 1905 and 1906, by rates, or expended out of them, for education, Poor Law administration, registration of voters, and main roads, distinguishing the amounts for England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, for each of those purposes in each of those years; and what were the gross estimated rentals and rateable values upon which such rates were levied.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) As regards Scotland and Ireland I must refer my hon. friend to the Secretary for Scotland and the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland. The following particulars relate to England and Wales, and give the latest figures I am at present able to supply. Education.—The total expenditure was approximately £22,124,000 in 1904–5, and £24,083,000 in 1905–6. The total amount estimated to have been raised by rates for this purpose was £9,618,000 in 1904–5, and £11,197,000 in 1905–6. Poor Law Administration.—The total expenditure on matters exclusively relating to the relief of the poor was £13,851,981 in 1904–5, and the proportion of this amount calculated to have been directly borne by rates was £10,478,966. Registration of Voters, and Main Roads.—The total expenditure in respect of the registration of voters (not including the remuneration of revising barristers) in 1903–4 was £257,837, and in respect of main roads was £2,407,042. The proportion directly borne by rates in these cases cannot be stated, but no specific grant was received by local authorities from the Exchequer in respect of them. Gross Estimated rental and rateable value.—At the commencement of 1904–5 the total gross estimated rental was £243,061,842, and at the commencement of 1905–6 £248,426,532. At the same dates the total rateable value of rateable hereditaments (including the annual value of property in respect of which contributions were made by the Government in lieu of rates) was £199,355,590 and £202,858,961 respectively.

Liverpool Distress Committee.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware of the resolution passed by the Liverpool Distress Committee stating the difficulties experienced in finding work for the unemployed under the limitations of the Act of 1905, and asking Parliament to amend the Act; whether he is aware of similar resolutions being passed by other committees and representative bodies, and of Government money being granted to relieve immediate distress in St. Helena and to start an industry there to provide employment; and whether he can now take further steps to meet more adequately the distress existing in our own cities and towns or introduce needful amendments of the Unemployed Act, as promised at the opening of the present Parliament.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware of the resolution passed by the Liverpool Distress Committee, and that other bodies have passed similar resolutions in favour of the adoption of schemes for works of a national character. For reasons which I have previously explained I do not contemplate proposing legislation to amend the Unemployed Workmen Act.

Inspection of the Scottish Schools.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state the amount estimated to be required in the year ending 31st March, 1908, to meet the administration expenses in London of the Scottish Education Department, and also the cost of inspection of Scottish schools.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The hon. Member will find this information under the head "Public Education, Scotland" (Class IV., Vote 8), in the Civil Service Estimates, which are now available to Members.

Local Government Expenditure.

MR. R. PEARCE: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the amounts provided in the United Kingdom, in the financial years to April, 1905, and April, 1906, out of taxes for education, and, if any, for Poor Law administration, registration of voters, and main roads, or allocated out of taxes for those purposes in each of those years, distinguishing, if possible, the amounts for England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland for each of those purposes.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith*). The materials for an Answer to this Question are not available in the Treasury, and they would have to be collected from a number of other departments. It would, therefore, be more convenient if my honourable friend would move for a Return.

Indian Public Works Department.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the total number of officers appointed from England to the Public Works Department in India during each of the past ten years, and the number and percentage of Indians so appointed each year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The information asked for is contained in the following Table:—

Total number of Assistant Engineers appointed from England to the Public Works Department in India during each of the last ten years, and the number and percentage of Natives of India so appointed.

Year.	Total Number of Assistant Engineers appointed from England.	Number of Natives of India appointed from England.	Percentage of Natives of India.
1897 - - - -	13	1	7·70
1898 - - - -	12	—	—
1899 - - - -	15	1	6·67
1900 - - - -	13	1	7·70
1901 - - - -	21	1	4·76
1902 - - - -	25	2	8·00
1903 - - - -	29	2	6·89
1904 - - - -	31	2	6·45
1905 - - - -	39	1	2·56
1906 - - - -	61	4	6·55

It has been decided that Indians should be eligible for appointment from England subject to a maximum limit of 10 per cent. I trust that the number of Indians qualified under the rules who will apply for appointments will be such as to permit this limit to be worked up to. The hon. Gentleman is doubtless aware that the ordinary means of access for Indians to the Public Works Department is through the Indian Engineering Colleges.

Indian Natives and the Public Works Department.

Sir H. COTTON: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is proposed to appoint any properly qualified Indians from England to the Public Works Department in India during the year 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) It was decided in 1905 that natives of India should be eligible for appointment from England, subject to a maximum limit of 10 per cent.; this decision does not come into force till 1908; but one native of India, belonging properly to the batch of appointments of 1907, has been already appointed in advance, after a shortened period of training, in consequence of the closing of Cooper's Hill College.

Clare Potato Crop Failure.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will inquire into the necessity of the Government granting some money towards the purchase of seed potatoes for the small farmers of Clondigad and Lissycasey, county Clare, where the potato crop was a complete failure.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The hon. Member appears to have been misinformed as to the state of last year's potato crop in this district. The Local Government Board have already inquired into the matter, and are satisfied that there was no serious failure of the crop there. The Board have received no representations that the people will be without seed, and the reports of their inspectors have led them to form an opposite conclusion.

Myshall Sanatorium for Consumptives.

Mr. A. ROCHE (Cork): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the corporation of Cork have, by a unanimous vote, decided to oppose the establishment of a sanatorium for consumptives at Myshall owing to the proximity of the proposed site to the Dripsey River and the consequent possibility of pollution of the water supply to the city of Cork; and that at a recent Local Government inquiry the military public health officer for Cork district gave evidence against the site, on the ground of the possibility of such pollution; and whether under these circumstances it is intended to proceed further with the scheme.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell*). The Local Government Board have not yet received their inspector's Report in this matter. The Board will, before arriving at a decision, give full consideration to the evidence received at the inquiry and to the opinion of the local authorities.

Volunteer Adjutants.

Colonel LONG (Worcestershire, Evesham): To ask the Secretary of State for War are adjutants of Volunteers, whose terms of service as adjutants expire during this or the next two months, to vacate their appointments and be replaced or to continue pending the introduction of the new system proposed.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) For the present there will be no change in existing arrangements, and the appointments to adjutancies in Volunteer corps will proceed in the usual manner.

Wesleyan Church at Aldershot.

Mr. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether substantial ground rents are charged by the War Office, under Treasury direction, for War Department sites at Aldershot, allotted for the purposes of soldiers' homes and church premises to Wesleyans who provide these homes at their own expense and then throw them open to all denominations; and whether rents are charged for similar sites for premises used by the Established Church.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) By Treasury direction any denomination requiring War Department land for the erection of institutions of the character referred to in the Question is required to pay the ordinary ground rent as appraised by the War Department valuer. However, a grant in aid of the rent may be made with Treasury sanction to these institutions, if exceptional reasons can be shown, but each case is considered on its merits.

Common Rights over Eltham Common.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Secretary of State for War under what Act the War Office acquired or extinguished the common rights over Eltham Common.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There is no such Act. I am, however, advised that all rights of common over Eltham Common long since ceased.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Admiralty Contracts and the Fair Wages Clause.

Mr. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in the contracts given to the Elswick firm, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the fair wages clause is made a condition of the work; and can he say whether such conditions are being observed in the building of His Majesty's Ship "Lord Nelson," now in course of construction by this firm at Jarrow.

*The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee): The "Lord Nelson" is being built at Jarrow by Palmer's Shipbuilding Company, and Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth & Company only hold the contract for the erection of the gun mountings of the ship. The contracts of both firms contain the fair wages clause, and the Admiralty have received no previous complaint of its infringement. If the hon. Member can give me any specific information on this point, I will have immediate inquiry made.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): Is it not the duty of the officials who inspect the construction of these war vessels to see that the wages clause is carried out?

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON asked for notice of that Question.

Boys in the Home Fleet.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if it is intended that the boys to be trained in the Home Fleet should form an integral part of the full complement of the Nore Squadron; and, if so, in what sense can that squadron be said to be fully manned.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I can only repeat what I have already said in a printed reply to a Question asked by the hon. Member for King's Lynn on 21st February,† that it has always been the practice of the Admiralty to treat details of complement as confidential.

MR. HUNT: Are the boys rated as supernumeraries?

[No Answer was returned.]

The Opium Traffic.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, seeing that crime in Burma has increased during the past twenty-five years with the growing consumption of opium, that the Report just issued shows how far opium is a predisposing cause of the crimes committed by Chinese in the Transvaal, and that the opium habit is being fostered among the Kaffirs, he will take into consideration the urgency of the steady suppression of the opium traffic in and from India, which is the principal source of supply.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): I am not sure that crime has increased in Burma owing to the greater prevalence of the opium habit. The percentage of opium consumers to the total jail population of Burma is less than it was in the past. The subject, my hon. friend may be certain, is receiving the closest attention of His Majesty's Government from every point of view.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is it not the fact that the Indian Government opened shops in Burma for the sale of opium, and thus encouraged the consumption of it?

MR. MORLEY asked for notice of that Question.

Afghan Amir's Visit to India.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, during the recent visit of the Amir of Afghanistan to India, there has been any exchange of political views with him.

MR. MORLEY: No. There was no exchange of political or military views; no proposals of a political character were made on either side, nor was any modification whatever suggested or discussed of the relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan as established by the treaty signed at Kabul, on 20th March, 1905.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) asked if the Governor-General in Council had been congratulated on the successful result and tactful treatment of this visit.

MR. MORLEY: I have no information on that subject.

Import Duties on Indian Goods.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what is the present approximate average rate of duty levied on all goods imported from India into each of the following countries; United Kingdom, United States, Germany, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1014.

MR. MORLEY: In order to comply with the hon. Member's request I propose to ask the Government of India to revise the table appended to their Fiscal despatch of 22nd October 1903, which gave the desired information on the basis of the import duties in force in the several countries at that date. I shall be happy to lay the revised table when I receive it.

Northern Nigeria Land Tax.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what total amount of land tax was raised in Northern Nigeria in the last financial year; on what basis of assessment this land tax is raised; whether white planters, as well as natives, are assessed to this tax; and over what parts of Northern Nigeria this tax is imposed.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, S.W.): The revenue from this tax in 1905–6 amounted to £34,000. For full information as to the assessment and incidence of the tax, I must refer the hon. Member to the "Memorandum on the Taxation of Natives in Northern Nigeria" by Sir Frederick Lugard, which has been laid before the House, and of which copies will be available for distribution in a few days.

Trinidad Customs Tariff.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Government of Trinidad have appointed a Commission to revise the local Customs tariff; that the sittings of such Commission are all being held in private; and that not a single representative of the working class has been appointed a Member of the said Commission; and, if so, and considering the importance of the question to the labouring classes, he can see his way to the appointment of a representative of labour on the Commission.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State is not yet in possession of any information with regard to the Commission in question beyond that which has appeared in the local Press. When a Report is received the point raised by the hon. Member will be considered.

Foreign Concessions in Persia.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the notification, in the Persian newspaper recording the proceedings of the new Persian Assembly, of the appointment by that body of a Commission to inquire into the concessions granted to British and other Foreign subjects within the Persian dominions; whether he has received any Reports on this subject from His Majesty's Legation at Teheran; and, if so, whether he can lay any such Reports upon the Table.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The latest information which has reached His Majesty's Government on this subject is contained in a telegram from His Majesty's Minister at Teheran, dated 1st March, and is to the effect that the matter, which has been the object of interpellations in the Persian Assembly, has now been dropped. It appears unnecessary to lay Papers, and unless the matter is revived there will hardly be any Papers on the subject in general.

Execution of a British Subject at Warsaw.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the official Report of the trial and execution of the British subject, A. J. Tingle, for robbing a tram conductor at Warsaw has been received; and, if not, will he ask for it.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Reports have now been received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Warsaw to the effect that, on 4th February last, a gang of young men, armed with revolvers, attacked and robbed a tramway conductor in that town. The gang then fled and one of them, who was immediately arrested with the conductor's money-bag in his possession, proved to be Adolphus Joseph Tingle, aged twenty-one, a locksmith by profession, and a British subject. On 18th February the Consul-General wrote to the chief of police asking to be supplied with the formal accusation against Tingle, and on the 20th February renewed his request verbally. On 23rd February it was announced in the Press that Tingle had been tried by a field court-martial the day before, but that the finding and sentence had not been made public. On seeing this announcement, Captain Murray at once went to see the Military Governor-General, and was informed that there was no doubt of Tingle's guilt, but that the sentence passed on him had not yet been confirmed. Captain Murray, understanding that a sentence of death was inevitable, as usual in such cases, asked whether, as Tingle was a British subject, this could not be commuted to banishment or some lighter punishment, but was informed that his crime was too grave for this. On 24th February, Captain Murray received from the Military Governor-General an official communication containing a formal notification of the accusation brought against Tingle, his trial and the sentence passed upon him, and stating that he had been executed that morning at 1.15 a.m. The Report I have received is to the effect that Tingle's guilt was clear; he was duly tried by the Court appointed for such offenders and the sentence passed on him was in accordance with the law at present in force in Russian Poland, which is invariably carried out in such cases. I consider that His Majesty's Consul-General did all that was proper and possible in the circumstances.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) asked whether this man was represented by counsel at the trial.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I cannot say. The trial was by court-martial. There is no doubt about his guilt, because he was caught in the act. The district is under martial law, and the treatment he received was that which would have been meted out to any one else.

LORD BALCARRES: When a British subject is executed for robbing a tram conductor does the British Government make no protest whatever?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Yes, Sir. The Consul-General took action immediately, and asked whether, as a British subject, this man's sentence could not be commuted. He was informed that the crime was too grave, and that if it had been committed by a Russian subject sentence would have been carried out in exactly the same way.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Will Papers be laid on the Table?

SIR EDWARD GREY: There is no occasion for that. I have given all the information we have. As I have said, crimes of a serious character in the district have been rife, and the district was under martial law.

MR. T. L. CORBETT: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire whether this man was represented by counsel?

SIR EDWARD GREY: There is no doubt about his guilt, and I think it is quite unnecessary to make any inquiries.

Turkish Customs.

MR. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, if the British Government give their assent to the increase in the Turkish Customs dues on certain conditions, the British Government will reserve the right of withdrawing its consent at any time if the Porte fails to observe any of these conditions; whether this withdrawal of consent, after the Customs dues have once been raised, will involve the restoration of these dues to their present rate; and, if so, how can this be managed.

I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the conditions which His Majesty's Government now insist on before they will sanction the increase in the Turkish Customs Tariff, and what the security will be for the carrying out of these conditions.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The matter is still under negotiation with the Turkish Government; when it is settled I propose to lay Papers which will explain all the conditions fully, and any partial statement on one or two points made now is bound to be more or less misleading.

MR. WEDGWOOD: Are we to understand that we shall know these conditions before the arrangement is completed, or only afterwards ?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The conditions will be published after the arrangement is complete.

*MR. REES: Do the conditions include any regarding the Bagdad Railway ?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The question of the Bagdad Railway cannot form part of the conditions of this arrangement, which is drawn up in consultation with the Powers concerned.

Moslem Pilgrims to Mecca.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the important sanitary and other improvements in the arrangements at Suez for the Moslem pilgrims on their way to and from Mecca, suggested by the director of the Suez Hospital in his Report for 1904–5, page 81, have yet been complied with by the Egyptian Government; and, if not whether steps are being taken to comply with them.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have not seen the Report, but I will inquire about it and as to the progress made with any recommendations contained in it.

Soudan Civil Court Judgeship.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will say what forensic experience Mr. George W. Williamson, who was appointed a Judge of Civil Courts in the Soudan in May, 1906, had.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I do not know about the appointment in question; if it has been made I have no reason to suppose that the person selected was not qualified for his duties, or that there is any necessity to make an inquiry about it.

Suez Canal Regulations.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, seeing that, apart from the £34,000,000 of the share capital of the Suez Canal Company owned by His Majesty's Government, there are three British directors representing His Majesty's Government and seven British directors representing British shipping interests on the Board, as well as in view of the probable adhesion of the Government of the French Republic, in which the bulk of the Company's share capital is owned, His Majesty's Government will endeavour to introduce regulations for the purpose of minimising the danger to the canal, to shipping, and to the lives of passengers from carrying explosives through the canal.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have nothing to add to the reply which I made to the hon. Member on the 22nd of November last;† it is obvious that it is to the interest of the Company to take proper precautions and that they are in the best position to judge what precautions are necessary.

The Egyptian Assembly.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been directed to the Resolutions passed by the Egyptian Assembly; and what action the British Government propose to adopt in view of them.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have seen some of the Resolutions in question. No action on the part of His Majesty's Government appears to be called for.

Ambassadorial Salaries and Allowances.

MR. GOOCH (Bath): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any allowances, apart from the use of a residence, are paid to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, in addition to his salary of £9,000; if so, what his total salary amounts to; and whether similar allowances are made in the case of Washington.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the hon. Gentleman putting the question was Mr. Bryce's Parliamentary Secretary, and that he is actuated by motives of loyalty to a departed chief ?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has no right to impute motives.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Certain allowances are assigned both to Paris and to

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxv., 1000.

Washington, but in the latter case they are of smaller amount. The total salary at Paris, including allowances and deducting income-tax, amounts to £10,021 a year; the total at Washington, similarly calculated, will be £9,900.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: Is our Ambassador at Washington the only one to whom an increase of salary has lately been granted?

Sir EDWARD GREY: Increases have been granted recently, and are from time to time granted when circumstances require it. I would suggest to the hon. Member that there will be ample opportunity for criticism on the Diplomatic Vote when there will be full information before the House.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): What a pity that the hon. Member for North Down was not made an Ambassador.

Macedonian Financial Reforms.

Mr. GOOCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what steps the Powers are taking to maintain the view of the Macedonian Financial Commission as against Hilmi Pasha, that the disposal of the *recettes spèciales* lies within their province, and that the sums nominally devoted to agricultural banks shall be entered on the Budget submitted to them.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The members of the Financial Commission are endeavouring to obtain the right to supervise the expenditure in Part II. of the Budget, which part includes the items of revenue mentioned by the hon. Member, and the matter is being referred to the Sublime Porte. As regards the sums levied in the three vilayets for the agricultural banks, an undertaking has been given by the Inspector-General that they would in future be employed exclusively in the three vilayets, and that two-thirds of the net profits of their operations would be devoted to the encouragement of agriculture.

Turkish Customs Duties Increase.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is in a position to announce a settlement of the Question of the increase in the Turkish customs duties.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The Answer is in the negative.

Merstham Tunnel Assault.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the recent alleged assault in the Merstham Tunnel, and to the fact that the alleged assailant was allowed to depart on giving his name and address, which afterwards turned out to be false; and whether he will consider the advisability of issuing recommendations, through the chief constables, that in all serious charges the person accused should not be allowed to go until the name and address he may have given have been verified.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): On making inquiry I am informed that the alleged offender in the case mentioned gave a wrong name and address to a railway official at Redhill, but, as doubts were entertained, he was followed by an inspector of the South Eastern Railway to Three Bridges, where his identity was ascertained. The police were not concerned in the matter at that time.

Bradford Half-Timers.

Mr. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that, notwithstanding the raising of the age at which children can be employed as half-timers from eleven to twelve years in January, 1902, the number of half-timers in the city of Bradford has increased from 2,998 in October, 1902, to 5,050 in October, 1906, whilst the total number of children between the ages of twelve and fourteen now in attendance at the Bradford schools is only 10,591; and whether the circumstances of Bradford, in having nearly one-half of the children who are eligible employed at an average rate of wages of 1d. per hour, or thereabouts, are similar to those obtaining in other towns; and, if so, whether he will have inquiries made into the cause thereof, with a view to the introduction of measures at an early date to deal with the question.

MR. GLADSTONE: I understand that the number of half-time scholars has increased at Bradford to the extent indicated in the question. An investigation of the subject of child employment in the Bradford mills was made by the lady inspectors' branch in 1905, the results of which are summarised on pages 315–6 of the last Annual Report of the chief inspector of factories—and it appears from this Report, and from such further inquiries as I have been able to make since my hon. friend put his Question down, that while the age for partial exemption has been raised, as stated, from eleven to twelve, the age for attendance at school has also been raised at Bradford from thirteen to fourteen, and the condition of obtaining total exemption made more difficult—children being required to pass the seventh standard, and not being able now to qualify by attendances alone; that this has resulted in children, who would previously have become full-timers before fourteen, continuing as half-timers; and, in consequence, the number of children employed half time has increased, with a corresponding diminution in the number of children employed full time. This appears to be borne out by the fact that the number of examinations by certifying surgeons of children for full time employment has fallen in the Bradford district from 3,752 in 1902 to 754 in 1906. It appears from the last report of the Board of Education that considerable increases in the number of half time scholars have taken place in other towns as well; for example, Sheffield, Burnley, and Blackpool. If the explanation which I have given is correct, the change is from more to less severe conditions of employment; but the whole question shall have my careful consideration.

Throgmorton Street.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that a number of Stock Exchange operators are in the habit of congregating daily in Throgmorton Street for the purpose of indulging in speculation in stocks and shares, options, the rise and fall of Government and other securities, and other transactions of a gambling and waging character; and whether he will take steps to enforce the provisions of the Street Betting Act against such persons.

MR. GLADSTONE: Penal statutes have to be construed strictly, and though the transactions referred to by the hon. Member may sometimes partake of a gambling character, they do not appear to come within the Act, which is aimed at persons loitering in a street "for the purpose of bookmaking or betting or wagering or agreeing to bet or wager or or paying receiving or settling bets."

MR. BOTTOMLEY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman did not consider that dealing in options only was wagering under the terms of the section.

MR. GLADSTONE: I would suggest that my hon. friend should himself set the law in motion.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: May I have the services of the learned Attorney-General and Solicitor-General?

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): Is Throgmorton Street a "place" within the meaning of the Act?

MR. GLADSTONE: That is not for me to decide.

The Edalji Case.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when it is intended to appoint the Committee on the Edalji case; and what will be the constitution of the Committee.

MR. GLADSTONE: At present I have nothing to add to the statement which appeared in the Press last Saturday. The names are the right hon. Sir Arthur Wilson, the right hon. J. L. Wharton, and Sir Albert de Rutzen, the Chief Magistrate of the Metropolitan Police Courts.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: When are the sittings likely to commence?

MR. GLADSTONE: I believe they have commenced.

Workmen's Compensation Case at Sunderland.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the case of a man named George Callan, of Sunderland, who was injured on 31st October, 1905, in the shipyard of Messrs. Blumer and Co., and who was paid, for about a year, 9s. 2½d. per week under the Compensation Act; whether he is aware that an application was then made to the County Court Judge by the employers to have the case reviewed with a view to a final settlement, the Judge ultimately reducing the allowance to 6s. per week, awarding costs against the injured man amounting to some £22, and permitting the 6s. per week to be kept off the man till the costs were paid, thus depriving him of any income for some eighteen months, leaving him to provide as best he could for his wife and three children and his wife's mother: and if he is prepared to introduce legislation with a view to preventing costs being awarded on such a large scale in the future, or deducted in the manner indicated.

MR. GLADSTONE: My attention had not previously been called to this case, but I have made inquiries of the County Court Judge who tried it. The Judge was unable at such short notice to give me full particulars of the case by referring to the Court records; but he informs me that the case was a long one, with no less than seven medical witnesses; that he came to the conclusion that the man had recovered from all direct effects of the accidents, and that his present condition could only be attributed remotely, and in a very slight degree, to the accident, if at all; that the man was, and had been for some time, able to do light work; and that, having regard to the circumstances of the case, it would not be just to refuse to allow the employers their costs, or to let the costs be taken into account with the compensation. I am afraid I cannot make any promise of legislation.

MR. SUMMERBELL: If the man had really recovered why was he awarded 6s. per week?

MR. GLADSTONE: I suppose because he was fit only for light work.

Prosecution of Croydon Anti-Vaccinationists.

MR. LUPTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that in Croydon 138 summonses have been taken out against anti-vaccinators; that the vaccination officer has promised to take out in all 1,000 summonses; and that fifty distress warrants are now being executed by the police; and if he will intervene to stop this prosecution of antivaccinators by legislative action or otherwise.

MR. GLADSTONE: I understand the facts are as stated. The police are bound by law to carry out the orders of the justices, and so long as the law remains as it is, it would not be proper for me, even if I had the power, to intervene for the purpose of preventing its being enforced.

MR. LUPTON: Are these prosecutions being instituted in such large numbers merely in order to ruin the local anti-Vaccination League?

MR. GLADSTONE: I have no information on that subject.

Inquiry into International Competition.

MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware of the inquiries undertaken by the Governments of Belgium, France, and Austria with regard to the extent to which their Home industries enter into the field of international competition; and whether he can see his way to institute such an official inquiry in this country.

MR. GLADSTONE: I am aware that this matter formed the subject of a Resolution at the International Conference on Labour Legislation which was held at Geneva last September, but I have not been approached on the subject. I will inquire through the Foreign Office what steps are being taken by the States mentioned, and when I have obtained the information I will communicate with the hon. Member.

Water Gas.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to carry into effect the recommendations of the Departmental Committee to control the supply of poisonous gas for heating and lighting purposes which does not possess a distinct and pungent smell.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): It is presumed that the question of the hon. Member refers to the Departmental Committee appointed by the Home Office in 1898 to inquire into the manufacture and use of water gas and other gases containing a large proportion of carbonic oxide. It is not my intention, as at present advised, to introduce a Bill on this subject. I may add that the Board of Trade are not aware that any gas which does not possess a distinct and pungent smell is used for heating and lighting purposes, and all the gas used for these purposes in the United Kingdom, whether coal gas alone or in admixture with water gas, is more or less poisonous.

North-Eastern Railway—Broadwood Junction Signals.

MR. HUDSON (Newcastle on-Tyne): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can say whether an inspecting officer of his Department has inspected the electric locking-bar in use at Broadwood Junction, North-Eastern Railway; whether it was passed as a satisfactory part of the interlocking of signals and points to ensure safety for passenger trains crossing other traffic at this place; whether the number of failures of this electric bar to act have been reported; and whether the signalmen are supplied with a key to disconnect the locking of this bar when they desire.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am making inquiry into this matter and will inform the hon. Member of the result.

German Imports of Agricultural Machinery.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that, according to the official German Returns, the imports of agricultural machinery into Germany from the United Kingdom amounted to £124,500 in 1902, £100,500 in 1903, £102,350 in 1904, and £121,600 in 1905, whereas, according to the Returns issued by the Board of Trade, the exports of agricultural machinery (both steam and non-steam) from the United Kingdom to Germany amounted to £280,811 in 1902, £346,677 in 1903, £401,083 in 1904, and £562,687 in 1905; and whether he can explain the discrepancy in the magnitude and movement shown by these two sets of figures.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The figures are correctly quoted from the Returns by the hon. Member. The discrepancy to which he draws attention is possibly attributabe to the fact that exports to the free port of Hamburg for eventual distribution to other parts of the world may have been declared as exports to Germany, while they would not figure in the Imperial German statistics of imports.

Hollesley Bay Colony.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any communications have been made to his Department or the Central Unemployed Committee by farmers or market gardeners in Suffolk or Essex, complaining of loss sustained by them owing to unfair competition by the produce of the farm at Hollesley Bay, which is subsidised by the Government to the extent of about £20,000 a year.

I beg also to ask the President of the Local Government Board, if he will make arrangements that all farm labourers thrown out of work by the competition of the unemployed farm colonies shall be received into those Colonies and saved from the necessity of coming up to London to seek work and join the ranks of the unemployed.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer together these two Questions. I am informed that the Central (Unemployed) Body have not received any official complaint on the subjects referred to in these Questions, nor have the Local Government Board. Some hon. Members however, have drawn my attention to complaints of the kind which have been made to them, and I have also seen complaints in the newspapers relative to this matter. It is one which I think deserves the serious consideration of the Central Body.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge): Is the produce of this Colony sold in the neighbourhood or elsewhere?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Until recently it was sold in the neighbourhood but now it is sent elsewhere.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if the experiment of growing beet for sugar at the Hollesley Bay colony was successful; and if he will consider the question of setting the unemployed to grow beet for sugar making on a commercial scale, as this will not compete with or damage any other English industry, and will employ a large number of hands; and whether he can see his way out of the grant for the unemployed to establish a factory for the manufacture of sugar, which will give further employment.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The only information I have on this subject is to the effect that the production of beet for sugar at the Farm Colony during the past year was 11 tons 2 cwt. per acre, with a percentage of sugar of 17·07. It rests with the Local Bodies under the Unemployed Workmen Act to propose schemes for temporary employment of the unemployed, but I may say that I should not regard with favour a proposal that a factory of the kind suggested should be established out of the Grant.

MR AUSTEN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Can the right hon. Gentleman state the percentage of sugar in this beet?

MR. JOHN BURNS: No Sir, but I am making inquiries and will communicate the result to the hon. Member.

Westminster County Council Election.

SIR ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest); I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the action of the town clerk of Westminster, who, as deputy returning officer for the Westminster division, on 2nd March, on the occasion of the London County Council election, prevented the personation agents of some of the candidates from being present to detect plural voting and otherwise performing their duties that the Act authorises; and further, whether, in view of the action of the said town clerk, he will secure the appointment as returning officer in this division at future elections of some other person who will carry out the Act without bias.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been called to this matter. I find that the town clerk is instituting proceedings for libel in connection with allegations to the effect stated in the Question, and that in these circumstances he thinks it better not to make any statement on the subject at the present time. The appointment of deputy returning officer rests with the returning officer. The Clerk of the County Council acted as returning officer at the recent election, and he has expressed to me his personal regret that difficulties of the kind indicated in the Question should have arisen.

Roydon Sewage Disposal Works.

MR. NIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has received the Report of the Board's inspector, Mr. H. R. Bicknell, of a local inquiry held by him at Roydon on the 12th February last with regard to proposed sewage disposal works at Roydon; and whether the Board, in the interests of public health, are prepared to sanction a scheme which authorises the discharge into the river Stort, the water of which is the partial source of the supply of drinking water for London, of the unpurified effluent of such proposed works in excess of six times the dry-weather flow of the sewage of such district.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have received the Report referred to. The inquiry related primarily to a proposal to acquire land compulsorily for the disposal of the sewage of Roydon. Some negotiations are, however, going on as to the acquisition of another site by agreement, and I am not at present in a position to come to a decision in regard to the scheme.

Hartley Wintney Schools.

SIR A. SPICER (Hackney, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will State the number of outbreaks of infectious disease which have occurred at the Hartley Wintney district schools during the last six years, with the dates of such outbreaks and the number of children affected in each instance.

MR. JOHN BURNS: There have been 186 cases of scarlet fever, diphtheria, pseudo-diphtheria and measles in the schools during the last six years. None of the cases were fatal. I will send my hon. friend a statement as to the dates of the outbreaks and the number of children affected in each instance.

Unemployed Women in West Ham.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his Board still adheres to the terms of the letter addressed to the West Ham Distress Committee on the 30th November 1906, in which it is stated that the President did not see his way to make a payment out of the Parliamentary grant for the assistance of unemployed women in West Ham, that the circumstances under which a grant for this purpose was made to the Central Unemployed Body for London were of an exceptional character, and that it is not proposed to make payments for a similar purpose elsewhere.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Yes, Sir.

Paupers' Diet.

MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has read the observations contained in the Report of Mr. P. A. Bagenal, one of the Board's inspectors, on the scale and standard of food in the workhouses, which he thinks is too high, in the course of which he stated, on the authority of some alleged scientific discoveries, that the body adapts itself rapidly to any change of diet, and advises that careful attention to that fact should be given when paupers are being fed at the public expense; whether it is the intention of the Board to act on the scientific discoveries mentioned by Mr. Bagenal and experiment upon paupers in the matter of food; and, having regard to Mr. Bagenal's further observation to the effect that cheap food in the shape of stale cheese, bread bits, bacon and liver bits, and bones from the butchers' shops are available for human food in all large towns, will he say whether these inquiries were made with his sanction.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have seen the observations in Mr. Bagenal's Report. The Local Government Board have no intention to experiment upon paupers in the matter of food. No sanction on the part of the Board was given to his making the inquiries referred to in the Question, nor was any such sanction necessary. He acted in the matter in the exercise of his own discretion.

MR. JOWETT: Do the Board approve the recommendations made in this Report?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have read the Report. It hardly bears the interpretation the hon. Member puts upon it.

New Zealand Mails.

*MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the reason for the suspension of the mail route to New Zealand via San Francisco or via Vancouver; what was the time occupied on each route respectively; what is the time by the present route via the Suez Canal; and whether the present arrangements are only temporary or, if not, how long they are likely to continue.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The use of the two routes mentioned in the Question has not at present been suspended so far as the British Post Office is concerned. Correspondence for New Zealand is still sent by both these routes, but in the case of Vancouver only if specially superscribed to that effect. The transmission of unsuperscribed correspondence by the Vancouver route was abandoned in 1899, when the packets ceased to call at Wellington and the route became less advantageous than other routes. The period of transit of the mail from London to Auckland via San Francisco may be put at thirty days, via Suez it is about thirty-nine days, and by way of Vancouver the time occupied is about seven weeks. I am not able to say how long the present arrangements will continue in force.

Harrington Postman's Pension.

*MR. BURNYEAT (Whitehaven): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that William Bryan, late town postman at Harrington, has served in such capacity for a period of twenty-nine years and nine months, but that he is now in receipt of a pension calculated on a basis of service of eighteen years only; if he will state specifically the particular regulation of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury which precludes them from granting Bryan a pension upon the basis of his total period of service; and whether the case of Bryan is unique, or do many employees of the Post Office labour under similar disabilities.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: During a period of eleven years, before his appointment to an established situation, Bryan was employed by the local postmaster and paid by him out of an allowance he received for providing for the delivery of correspondence at Harrington. Under the Treasury regulations no service which has not been paid for directly out of moneys provided by Parliament is pensionable. There are other officers in a position similar to that of Bryan; but the number is not great.

MR. FULLERTON: Will the right Gentleman consider the possibility of making a compassionate allowance from the Rowland Hill fund?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have no control over that fund, but if the facts are laid before me, I will see what can be done.

*MR. BURNYEAT: How many Post Office employees labour under a similar disability?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I cannot say, but it is a very large number.

Dismissals for Post Office Employment.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether there is any regulation of the Postal Service under which a postal servant may be dismissed on the sole ground that he resides upon licensed premises; and, if so, can he state the grounds upon which this regulation is held to be necessary.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The hon. Member probably has in mind a recent case at Stockport, in which the Postmaster, acting under a misapprehension, terminated the services of a telegraph messenger because his home was on licensed premises. The Postmaster has been properly instructed and the messenger will be re-employed. I regret that the misunderstanding should have occurred.

Illegal Practices at the County Council Election.

SIR ROBERT HOBART: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to or has he received any complaints of personation, plural voting, and other illegal practices at the recent London County Council election; and whether he will direct inquiries, and if necessary, proceedings to be taken against the offenders in such cases to bring them to justice.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir JOHN WALTON, Leeds, S.): I do not think it is any part of my duty to make inquiries into this subject. If any reliable information should come before my hon. friend of the illegal practices to which he refers he should communicate with the Public Prosecutor, whose duty it would be to take such proceedings as he deems advisable for bringing the offenders to justice.

Farsley District Councillor's Grievances.

MR. JOWETT: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General if he is aware that Mr. J. Walker of Farsley was asked to withdraw from his candidature for the district council by his employer, with an intimation that his further employment might depend on his withdrawal; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any action under The Municipal Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, 1884, section 11, or any other section of the Act in the case.

SIR JOHN WALTON: I am not aware of the incident to which the hon. Member refers. If he alleges a breach of the law, information should be furnished to the Director of Public Prosecutions who will take such steps as he thinks necessary to enforce the provisions of the Act.

County Council Election Literature.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been directed to the fact that at the recent London County Council election in constituencies in each of which only a few hundred pounds could be legally expended on advertising, postages, hire of committee rooms, etc., tens of thousands of pounds were used by the Moderate Party on coloured posters, open-air lecturers and canvassers, 250 gramophones with attendants, leaflets, etc.; and whether he can see his way forthwith to introduce legislation to put an immediate end to this evasion of the Corrupt Practices Act.

SIR JOHN WALTON: The facts are as stated by the hon. Gentleman. There is, I think, an anomaly in the existing law whereby a statutory limit is placed on expenditure during elections, and, as I have said, this and other principles of the Corrupt Practices Act need our consideration, and I hope before long they will receive it.

Welsh Education Department.

MR. WALROND (Devonshire, Tiverton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he will grant a Return showing the *personnel*, emoluments, pensions, and conditions of service of the newly formed Welsh Department in the Board of Education.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The higher staff of the Welsh Department will, on its formation, consist of six officers on the administrative side. Their emoluments will be the same as those of officers of corresponding rank in other departments of the Board, with the exception that the Secretary will receive £1,200. Their pensions and conditions of service are governed by the ordinary rules of the Civil Service.

Custom House Quay Billingsgate.

MR. CHARLES WILSON (Hull, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will permit the fishing trade of this country to have the use of Custom House, near by, as a convenience to the users of Billingsgate, from the hours of 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. daily.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Mr. ASQUITH): I assume that my hon. friend refers to the space known as the Custom House Quay. The suggestion was carefully considered by my right hon. friend last summer at the instance of the City Corporation and other bodies; but as the proposed use of the Quay for fish market purposes would interfere with the work of the Custom House and also detract from the amenities of the area as an open space, he did not see his way to comply with the request.

Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes.

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that the clerks to surveyors of taxes are unestablished officers, and to the confidential nature of their work; and whether, with a view of getting the *status* and conditions of their employment put upon a basis commensurate with the responsibility of their duties, he will consider the desirability of appointing a Select Committee of the House of Commons to go into the matter and make recommendations thereon.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The matter is receiving my careful attention, but I do not think there is any necessity for the appointment of a Select Committee.

National Physical Laboratory at Bushy.

SIR W. EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that discontent has been publicly expressed with the policy of the Executive Committee of the National Physical Laboratory, Bushy; that the National Physical Laboratory contemplates undertaking routine commercial testing, in spite of the fact that all the witnesses examined by the Treasury Committee of 1897 were, without exception, agreed that no such work should be done by the laboratory; and whether steps will be taken to prevent an institution, subsidised by the Government, entering into competition with private testing firms.

I beg also to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the National Physical Laboratory, Bushy, was brought into existence for the express purpose of carrying on research work for the good of the community; whether the laboratory, which enjoys a subsidy from the Government, is being used for routine commercial testing; and, if so, will he say what steps are taken to prevent the undertaking of such work, curtailing the quantity and usefulness of the research work and defeating the object for which the laboratory was brought into existence.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The reply to both the Questions of the hon. Member is that a Committee is now considering the points which he raises, and that I am unable to make any statement in respect of them pending its report.

SIR W. EVANS GORDON: Is the hon. Gentleman satisfied that the outside persons referred to in the Question are adequately represented on the Committee?

MR. RUNCIMAN: My Answer to the next Question deals with that point.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that of the five members of a Treasury Committee recently appointed to inquire into the administration and conduct of the National Physical Laboratory, two of those Members are also members of the Executive Committee of the National Physical Laboratory whose policy is called in question; and whether, with a view to restore public confidence in the future conduct of the National Physical Laboratory, he will appoint a committee independent of the laboratory.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The two Members of the Committee referred to were nominated by the Royal Society to represent its views at the invitation of the Treasury. The remaining Members were appointed directly by the Treasury. There is nothing unusual in the composition of the Committee and I see no grounds for the lack of public confidence which the hon. Member suggests.

SIR W. EVANS GORDON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Treasury Committee has been instructed to report whether it be to the public advantage that the National Physical Laboratory should continue to compete with private testing establishments, such competition having been forbidden by the Report of the Treasury Committee of 1898 when defining the function and scope of the National Physical Laboratory.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The Committee was appointed "to inquire generally into the work now performed at the National

Physical Laboratory, with special reference to (1) the character of the mechanical, physical and chemical tests undertaken there; (2) the possibility of their interfering unduly with the business of other agencies; (3) the desirability of publishing the results of all such testing work; and to report—(1) whether having regard to the industrial interests of the country generally and to those of private agencies, any change is desirable in the scope of the work of the laboratory, and (2) on what lines any further development of its business should proceed."

National Gallery Alterations.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if his attention has been directed to the repairs which are now being executed at considerable expense on the entrance floor to the National Gallery; and whether, when these alterations are completed, it is the intention of the Trustees again to place the space now being redecorated at the disposal of private advertisers without charging rent, as in the past.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I understand that the Trustees and Director have no such intention.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: Is the old arrangement to be continued?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have given the hon. Member all the information supplied me.

Irish Salt Firkin Butter.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state when the Butter Bill is to be considered; and whether he will consider the request generally made in certain parts of Ireland for the exemption of Irish salt firkin butter from the proposed standard of moisture about to be set up.

*MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): Owing to financial exigencies, I am afraid no opportunity will be found for the Second Reading of the Bill before the Easter recess, but it is hoped that the Second Reading of the Bill may be obtained soon after, but I am unable at the moment to name the exact day. The Bill does not affect the amount of moisture permissible in Irish salt firkin butter unless it has been blended or re-worked in a factory.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the bulk of the Irish butter traders object to any exemption, and that the Select Committee reported against it?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I am aware that evidence was given before the Select Committee such as the hon. Member refers to, and the Board of Agriculture are fully aware of the views of the Committee and have considered their Report.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: The point is that the farmers in every district want it.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick E.): And so do those in mine.

Gooseberry Mildew.

MR. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether in view of the loss now sustained by the fruit growers, it is the intention of the Government at an early date to propose legislation which will enable insect and other pests which infect fruit to be effectually dealt with; and, if it is intended to propose legislation, will the Government use every endeavour to bring it into force by May, in view of the fact that the disease will, during that month, begin to spread from the affected gooseberry plantations.

MR. J. A. PEASE: The President of the Board of Agriculture hopes very shortly to be in a position to introduce legislation to confer on the Board and on local authorities further powers to deal with insect and other destructive pests. The suggestion made by my hon. friend in the latter part of his Question will be kept in view.

Boy Offenders in Edinburgh.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in view of the fact that sheriffs in the summary courts of Glasgow have power to send a lad to a reformatory instead of to prison, he will introduce legislation to confer similar powers upon the summary courts in Edinburgh.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): The point raised by the Question is of great importance, and I have submitted it to the Corporation of Edinburgh and to the sheriff. The sheriffs in Glasgow have power to sentence lads to be detained in reformatories, and owing to the arrangements made in that city these sentences are effectively carried out. The sheriffs in Edinburgh have a similar power, and no legislation is required to confer this upon them. I regret, however, to say that it cannot be effectively exercised, owing to the corporation not as yet seeing its way to make the relatively small contributions necessary towards maintenance. This refusal has lasted for some years, notwithstanding the protests of successive Secretaries for Scotland. It is founded upon an idea of legal disability under the Prisons Act of 1877, which idea has been pronounced by Lord Dunedin, then Secretary for Scotland, and now Lord President of the Court of Session, to be erroneous. In that opinion I respectfully concur. Lord Dunedin's opinion was communicated to the Town Clerk so far back as 19th December, 1903, but the Corporation of Edinburgh has not yet seen its way to change its attitude so far as regards sentences pronounced in the Sheriff Court are concerned. I may add that the sheriffs view with deep concern the existing state of matters, and on 14th February last Sheriff Maconochie wrote to my right hon. friend the Lord Provost pointing out that in his opinion the result of the town council's declinature had been disastrous for the city. In his Report to me the sheriff states as follows—"The state of matters in Edinburgh, owing largely, in my opinion, to the decision of the town council, is most serious. There are regular organised bands of juvenile thieves and housebreakers growing up in our midst." He points out how these lads are deprived in Edinburgh of the best, indeed the only, chance of reformation, and he gives details of the spread of a great evil in the community in consequence. While, as I have stated, I think legislation to enable Edinburgh to adopt another course is unnecessary, I sincerely trust that the present grave evil will be removed forthwith by the needful action on the part of that city.

Illegal Trawling off Sutherlandshire.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in consequence of the complaints of illegal trawling on the north and west coasts of Sutherlandshire, he has taken means to have those coasts properly policed and the law-breakers punished.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The fishery cruiser "Minna" visited the north and north-west coast of Sutherlandshire about 11th ultimo, and she has just repeated the visit.

Trawling in the Moray Firth.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether there are at present any trawlers at work in the Moray Firth.

MR. SINCLAIR: The latest Report from the Fishery Board is to the effect that on 2nd March four trawlers were detected fishing in the Moray Firth.

MR. MORTON: Have none been detected since?

MR. SINCLAIR: If the hon. Member will put another Question down, I will inquire.

Education Expenditure in Ireland.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give any explanation of the fact that in the Estimates of 1901–2 the amounts given to education were, respectively, England £9,765,000, Scotland £1,353,000, Ireland £1,301,000, whereas in the Estimates for 1906–7 the amounts were England £13,139,600, Scotland £1,983,000, Ireland £1,393,223.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): It would not be possible to discuss, within the limits of an Answer, the question raised by the hon. Member. I may, however, observe that a comparison between the Votes mentioned cannot justly be instituted. The Votes for England and Scotland include provision for secondary and technical education, while the Vote for Ireland refers to primary education alone, and indeed does not include the whole of the provision voted for that service. Secondary and technical education are otherwise provided for in Ireland.

Mr. MURPHY: In view of the disparity shown by these figures, will the right hon. Gentleman make representations to the Treasury on the subject?

Mr. BIRRELL: I am fully alive to the importance of the subject. It is one of the most vital questions affecting Ireland just now, and I hope there may soon be an opportunity of discussing it at the length it deserves.

Colonel Bredin's Longford Estate.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the cause of the delay in the inspection of Colonel Alex Bredin's estate in county Longford, Estates Commissioners' record 2201; whether the agreements for sale have been lodged since May, 1905, since which time the tenants have been compelled to pay interest in lieu of rent, which is a loss to them; whether he is aware that there are practically no difficulties in the way of an immediate inspection and report; and will he now cause this to be done without further delay.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners deal with estates according to priority of application, and the estate in question has not yet reached its turn for inspection. The inspection will take place about July next.

Aghnacliffe Evicted Tenant.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been called to the case of Mrs. Bernard Doyle, of Samagh, Achnacliffe, North Longford, who was evicted two years ago by the Duc de Stacpoole, and whose farm was grabbed by Pat Mulligan of the same place; whether any application has been received by the Commissioners for reinstatement from this woman; whether the inspector has visited the holding, and, if not, will he now be directed to do so; whether he will inquire into the manner in which the eviction was carried out, which the evicted tenant states was informal; and, if so, whether the inspector will arrange for her immediate reinstatement.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received no application for reinstatement from Mrs. Doyle. The reply to each part of the Question is therefore in the negative.

Children's Defective Eyesight in Irish Schools.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the promise given by Mr. Bryce on 19th November, 1906, that he would without delay commend to the consideration of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland the necessity of collecting information on the subject of the alleged increase of defective eyesight of children attending public schools in Ireland; whether any steps have been taken in this matter; and whether the Commissioners propose to make any arrangements, such as exist in England, for the testing of the sight of these children and for guarding against any further increase of the scourge of defective eyesight.

Mr. BIRRELL: My attention has been called to this matter. The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they have issued a number of queries to the teachers, relative to the eyesight of children attending national schools. The teachers' statements will be carefully tabulated and considered when received. The Commissioners state that they have no means of providing for the testing of the children's sight. The steps which have been taken in this respect in England have been instituted by local authorities of their own motion.

Comyn-Kenney Estate, Galway.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, upon what date the Congested Districts Board bought the Comyn-Kenney, Galway, property; and whether he can state when the holders of uneconomic plots in the vicinity may expect to have the land divided amongst them.

MR. BIRRELL: The Congested Districts Board agreed to purchase the estate in question on 11th August, 1904, but owing to legal difficulties as to the title, it has not yet been vested in the Board. Meanwhile, the Board have no power to distribute the estate.

Coosecroum Improvements.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Board has agreed to carry out improvements at Coosecroum, in view of the representations which have been made frequently during the past six years.

MR. BIRRELL: My predecessor informed the hon. Member on 14th December last† that the Congested Districts Board had postponed the question of constructing a pier at Coosecroum until it should be ascertained what works were to be carried out at Reenard Point and what contribution, if any, they should give to such works. The case of Reenard Point has not yet been disposed of.

Leahy Estate, near Cahirciveen.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any, and, if so, what, steps have been taken by the Estates Commissioners to complete the negotiations for the purchase of the J. W. Leahy estate at Aghatubrid, near Cahirciveen, in view of the fact that the estate was inspected last year and that the landlord and tenants agreed, early in January, to let the price be fixed by the Estates Commissioners.

MR. BIRRELL: The proceedings first instituted in regard to this estate were for direct sale from the landlord to the tenants. The Estates Commissioners, however, decided that it would be more advantageous that they themselves should purchase the estate. Proceedings to that end are being taken, and the Commissioners hope to be in a position shortly to make an offer to the landlord for purchase.

Irish Development Grant.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what charges have been made upon the Irish Development Grant to the present date, including charges in respect of the issues of Irish Land Stock up to the 31st December, 1906; and what amount of Irish Land Stock is intended to be issued during the present year.

MR. BIRRELL: The hon. Member will find information on this subject in the Lord-Lieutenant's Report of Proceedings under the Ireland Development Grant Act for the year ending 31st March, 1906 (Cd. 2937), and in the previous similar Reports. The Report for the current financial year cannot be completed until after the 31st instant. Further issues of land stock will be made as necessity arises, but the amount which will be issued during the present year cannot now be definitely stated.

Arterial Drainage (Ireland) Commission—Report.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether a summarised Report of the Arterial Drainage (Ireland) Commission has been made public; if so, does it recommend that arterial drainage in Ireland should be conducted by and at the cost of the State; and can he say what machinery is suggested in the Report to carry out the views of the Commission, and will the Government introduce measures at an early date to give effect to the recommendations contained in the Report.

MR. BIRRELL: The Report was laid upon the Table on Thursday last, but no authoritative summary of it has been issued. I understand that copies of the Report will shortly be ready for distribution. It would be difficult, within the limits of an Answer, to indicate the substance of the Report. I may say, however, that the statement that it recommends that arterial drainage should be conducted by and at the cost of the State would not correctly represent its purport. I am not at present in a position to make any further statement in connection with the Report.

Count Blake's Galway Estate.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been directed to the condition of the small holders of land in the villages of Tarea, Parkrae, Toreen, and Caherdoo, in the parish of Ballindereen, county Galway; whether the landlord of the said villages, Count Blake, of Clough Ballymore, Kinvara, county Galway, offered his estate, including 5,000 acres of untenanted land, for sale to the Estates Commissioners some three years ago; whether the estate was inspected; and, having regard to the sad condition of the small colony of people holding patches of land in the district, will he explain the cause of the delay in not carrying out some improvement scheme up to the present.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxvii., 829.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that proceedings for the sale to them of this estate were instituted a little more than a year ago, not three years ago. The estate, comprising about 5,000 acres in all, has now been inspected, and the Commissioners are about to make an offer for purchase. If their offer should be accepted, they will proceed to prepare a scheme for the division of the untenanted land, but this will take some time.

Excluded Tenants.

MR. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, can he say what may approximately be the number of future and excluded tenants in all Ireland, and what is the number in East Limerick; and do the Government, in this session of Parliament, intend to introduce any legislative measure whereby this class of tenants should be placed on an equal footing with all others either renting or purchasing their farms.

MR. BIRRELL: The Land Commission have no records whatever of the number of future tenants in East Limerick or elsewhere. Future tenants, except those whose tenancies were created since 1901, are in no way debarred from obtaining advances under the Land Purchase Acts, and many of them have already purchased their holdings under those Acts. The question whether it would be possible or desirable to extend to future tenants the fair rent provisions of the Land Acts is one which could not be discussed within the limits of an Answer

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman give the number of tenants who have been converted into caretakers under Section 7 of the Land Act, 1887?

MR. BIRRELL: I have not got that in my head.

Price of Irish Land.

MR. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, can he, seeing that according to a Report lately issued by the Estates Commissioners many estates are being sold at 68 per cent. in advance of the average prices under the Ashbourne and former Acts in Ireland, say whether the Executive Government have any share, through the machinery of the law, in bringing on such a state of things; and, if so, what in the present circumstances of Ireland justifies them in supporting it; and do they hold out any promise of legislation whereby the prices of land may be reduced to the normal condition which obtained from 1885 to that consequent on the Act of 1903.

MR. BIRRELL: It is probable that no really true comparison can be made between the prices paid for land before the passing of the Act of 1903 and since that date, but there is no doubt that during the latter period higher prices have been paid than during the former. For that result the Executive Government is in no way responsible. It has come about through the willingness of the tenant purchasers to pay the higher prices. I am not at present in a position to hold out a promise that legislation of the character indicated in the Question will be undertaken.

Sabadoo Evicted Tenant.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners will make a money grant to Moses Glen, of Sabadoo, Killygordon, county Donegal, to build up his houses and re-stock his farm, situated on the Stewart estate, from which he was evicted, and now restored, but without the necessary means to begin farming with.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have had this case investigated by an inspector and are about to consider his report upon it. The question of making a grant to the evicted tenant will be considered.

Grant for Teaching Irish.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the existing scale of fees for the teaching of Irish in national schools; whether it is calculated on the average attendance or the actual number of children learning Irish; and what was the fee paid prior to the change in 1906.

Mr. BIRRELL: The existing scale of fees for instruction in Irish as an ordinary subject in national schools is 1s. per unit of the average attendance in the Irish classes in the second and third standards, and 2s. 6d. per unit in the fourth and higher standards, provided in each case that the proficiency is satisfactory. The fee paid for instruction in Irish as an extra subject prior to the change in 1906 was 10s. for each pupil in *bona fide* attendance throughout the course, provided that the progress of the Irish class as a whole was reported by the inspector as satisfactory. Fees were not paid for pupils in any standard lower than the fourth.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the matter of fees for the teaching of Irish in national schools, a new scheme has been considered by the National Board, and, if so, what decision was come to; whether the matter has been submitted to the Treasury; whether the Treasury intends to provide increased funds this year; and whether in view of the dissatisfaction with the present scale of fees, steps will be taken to secure that the revised scale shall apply to the current year.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I answered a Question similar to this on the 19th ultimo, to which perhaps I may refer the hon. Member.† As regards, however, the specific points raised in his Question, the Answer to the first and third is in the affirmative, and to the last two in the negative. I am only indirectly acquainted with the decision of the National Board.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: Is there to be no additional grant this year?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No grant over and above that given last year.

Crime in Leitrim.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the remarks of Mr. Justice Kenny, at the opening of the Leitrim Assizes, on Monday, as to the lawless condition of the district; and whether he will state the nature of the steps being taken by the Executive to stop boycotting, to protect the families who are in danger, and prevent His Majesty's mails from being robbed.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): At the same time I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the charge of Mr. Justice Kenny at the Leitrim Assizes on the increase of crime and the lawless state of the county, and to the fact that so few persons have been made amenable to justice; and what steps he proposes to take to preserve the peace of this district.

Mr. BIRRELL: The county of Leitrim is in a peaceable condition, except that portion of the Barony of Dromahair lying about Lough Allen. In that locality differences arose last spring on some twelve estates between landlords and tenants, owing to the failure of negotiations for purchase, and these differences have continued unabated until now. The Estates Commissioners have approached the parties with a view to an amicable settlement; but hitherto without any successful result. They are, however, not without hope that better counsels may prevail on some at least of the estates concerned. Last July the police force in the localities in question was strengthened, and the expenses of the extra force is now being charged to the localities. Undoubtedly the disposition of the people in this limited area is turbulent at present owing to the agrarian dispute, but every effort is being made to find the solution of the dispute. Meantime the police are on the alert for the preservation of the peace.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 719.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Justice Kenny did not limit his remarks to the small areas which the right hon. Gentleman has indicated, but that he spoke of the whole county, with the exception of small areas here and there, as being in a very disturbed state?

MR. BIRRELL: I only give the information I have received from my own authorities. I have read the language of Mr. Justice Kenny. I say nothing about it.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Is it the custom for English Judges to make political harangues from the Bench?

MR. BIRRELL: I have known it done.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if in the matter of a charge from this district tried before Mr. Justice Kenny, the jury refused to convict in the light of day and against the evidence?

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

MR. LONSDALE: Will the right hon. Gentleman in the meantime take steps to prevent His Majesty's mails from being robbed?

MR. BIRRELL: I will take every step to prevent every robbery within my power.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): How much of the trouble in Ireland is due to the consumption of Dunville's whisky?

[No Answer was returned.]

Royal Hibernian Academy.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the statement of the case submitted to counsel by the Royal Hibernian Academy with reference to the payment of the annual grant of £300 to the Academy; and can he say what steps will be taken to meet the claim of the Academy as formulated before the recent Committee of Inquiry.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My attention has been drawn to the statement referred to. As the hon. Member was informed on the 20th December last, and the 19th ult., the matter is still under consideration,† but I hope very shortly to be in a position to announce a decision.

Lord Esher.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether Lord Esher is still a member of the Imperial Defence Committee; and, if so, for what term is he appointed.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): Lord Esher was appointed a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence by the late Prime Minister towards the end of November, 1905. I understand that no period was fixed when the appointment was made.

Clerkenwell County Court Clerk's Retirement.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will consider the services of Mr. Charles George Hunt, of Danesbury, Warwick Road, New Barnet, with a view to making him a grant from the Royal Bounty or Special Service Funds; and whether, in view of the fact that he was clerk of the county court of Clerkenwell for a period of nearly sixty years, his appointment having been submitted to and sanctioned by the Treasury in 1847, and that he was continued in that position with the approval of the Treasury up to the 30th September, 1906, and in view of the fact that he is in the receipt of no pension, in failing health, and impoverished circumstances, special consideration can be given to his case.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Mr. Hunt was not employed by the Government, but was in the personal service of a county court registrar. During the whole of his service, nearly sixty years, Mr. Hunt received a regular salary, amounting at one time to £375 a year. He was aware that he was not entitled to a pension. I regret that I am unable to assist him from the funds at my disposal.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxvii., 1733; clxix., 719, 720.

Mr. CARLILE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Hunt was appointed by the Treasury in 1847 at a time when such clerks were appointed by the Treasury?

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): Is the Prime Minister aware that there was in the service of the State a man for forty-seven years who only got 21s. a week, and a pension has been refused to him?

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not know; I am only concerned with the administration of the funds which are entrusted to me, and, so far as I can make out, none of these funds are applicable to such cases.

The Appointment of Magistrates.

Mr. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that twenty out of twenty-six new magistrates lately appointed in Northamptonshire were Liberals, three of them being passive resisters, he will take steps to introduce legislation and provide for the appointment of magistrates irrespective of political opinion.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The magistrates lately appointed in Northamptonshire were so appointed on the recommendation of the Lord-Lieutenant, and the Lord Chancellor is quite satisfied that they were proper persons to appoint. The hon. Member is apparently not aware of the fact that in many counties there is an extreme disparity between the classes and opinion as represented on the Bench. This is generally recognised as a most undesirable state of things, and some restoration of a decent balance is generally considered expedient in order to secure confidence in the fair administration of justice. If that confidence cannot be secured, it may become necessary to take such steps as the hon. Member indicates.

Mr. HUNT asked whether it was right that men who had refused to be bound by the law should be chosen to enforce the law.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am not informed on the question whether any of these gentlemen had been passive resisters, but I think we hear of passive resistance advocated in quarters which somewhat surprise us in these days, in places which have almost the odour of sanctity.

Mr. HUNT: Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that three of these gentlemen were passive resisters?

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I know nothing about it, nor does the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. HUNT: If they are, does the right hon. Gentleman approve of their appointment?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the dissatisfaction prevailing throughout the country at the slight progress that has been effected in remedying the admitted evil of one political Party so strongly predominating on the county benches, he will consider the advisability of affording the Lord Chancellor assistance so that he can deal with this matter with greater expedition.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: So long as the law places the appointment of magistrates in the personal discretion of the Lord Chancellor, I am sure that he will discharge the duty himself and not delegate it to any other persons. With regard to the allegation that slight progress has been made, I can only say, after having made myself acquainted with the facts, that no time has been wasted by the Lord Chancellor and no pains spared.

The South Wales Colliery Explosion.

Mr. THOMAS RICHARDS (Monmouthshire, W.): I beg to ask the Home Secretary if he is aware that there are four workmen still entombed at Genwen as a result of the explosion last Tuesday, and that two members of the rescue party who entered the gallery cannot be communicated with. What steps have been taken for their relief?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I regret to say that I have received the following telegram from the Inspector of Mines:—"Genwen.—An explosion occurred at 6.30 p.m. 5th March, whereby four men were killed and two who went to the rescue were suffocated by after-damp. The bodies were recovered this morning".

Mr. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman what steps, if any, he has taken to bring to the notice of the colliery proprietors of this country the information gathered by the two representatives sent from the Home Office to investigate the cause of the Courrières colliery explosion in France, with special reference to the life-saving appliances used by the German explorers after that disaster? Have not these two brave South Wales colliers lost their lives in consequence of the lack of rescue appliances, and what steps does the right hon. Gentleman propose to take to prevent so great and disastrous a calamity occurring again?

Mr. GLADSTONE: It would be more satisfactory if I had notice of the Question. I have no detailed information as to this particular accident. As to the general question, I am doing everything in my power to hasten forward inquiries with a view to the adoption of the best appliances for protecting lives.

Mr. THOMAS RICHARDS: Seeing that there is a Royal Commission inquiring into mining matters generally, will the right hon. Gentleman press on them the urgency of this phase of mining life? We have more than 500,000 men going down into pits every day, and there is absolutely no provision for saving life.

Mr. GLADSTONE: That matter is before the Commissioners, and I hope their Report will be presented before long.

Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY: Is it not the fact that the deaths in mines in this country amount to three every day in the year?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I have not made that calculation.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): Has the Home Office sent any experts down to assist?

Mr. GLADSTONE: The Mines Inspector is on the spot. As I have said, I have no details beyond those given in the telegrams from the Mines Inspector.

Further questioned by Mr. KEIR HARDIE.

Mr. GLADSTONE added: Any assistance that is required or asked for by the Mines Inspecctor will at once be sent. I will make full inquiry. I gather from the telegrams that everything possible has been done in this particular case.

Mr. THOMAS RICHARDS: I feel so strongly on this matter that I proposed to move the adjournment of the House, but I do ask the right hon. Gentleman to bring at once some pressure to bear to secure either by legislation or otherwise that the lives of these workmen shall be better protected than they are. As an absolute fact we have more than 500,000 men going down the mines every day. There is absolutely not——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order! Order! This is not the proper time to make a speech.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Lough (added in respect of the Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill); and had appointed in substitution: Mr. William Priestley (in respect of the Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

RELEASED PERSONS (POOR LAW RELIEF) BILL.

"To make better provisions as to the Relief of Persons released from detention in Prisons, Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and Inebriate Reformatories," presented by Mr. Herbert Samuel; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 100.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), notwithstanding anything in Standing Order No. 15.—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

SUPPLY [2nd Allotted Day].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1908, including 18,595 Royal Marines."

Mr. WYNDHAM (Dover) said that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty on Tuesday last had gone some way towards dispelling the doubts which had been most legitimately entertained in the country upon some aspects of the Government's naval policy during last autumn and the early winter. But some doubts still remained, and it was with those he wished to deal that afternoon. He did not propose to touch on the financial aspect of the right hon. Gentleman's policy. It was believed that the amount of repairs at present in hand had not been adequately dealt with, and he hoped the Government would reassure the Committee on that important point. It was said not only that one effect of the present policy of laying up a number of ships was to increase the amount of repairs that had to be done, but that greater difficulty was found now than heretofore in getting repairs expeditiously carried out. It was not for him to speak on matters of technical detail, but he hoped the Government would be able to reassure the Committee on that important point also. He wished, however, to dwell rather on the question of the two-Power standard. He deprecated in all seriousness the use of any words which could throw any doubt, justifiably or not, on our inflexible resolve to maintain the policy of the two-Power standard as it was commonly and easily understood. He did not make this a charge so much against the Secretary to the Admiralty, for he made sparing use of such language. But any use of it was dangerous. The hon. Gentleman who sat behind the right hon. Gentleman had made lavish use of it, and the Prime Minister himself was not the least of the offenders in this respect. They nullified the advantage of the policy which had been pursued by agreement between Parties if they used words which created any doubt of our intentions. It was a policy of rule of thumb, he admitted, but a rule of thumb was something which every one could understand, and therein lay its strength. The Secretary to the Admiralty thought it necessary—he himself thought it was unnecessary and inexpedient—to indulge in retrospect; he said he remembered a time when the two-Power standard was applied to two specified Powers, and by that phrase suggested that there had been some change in policy. But the two Powers which at any rate had in recent years been taken were the two Powers which at the time happened to be the greatest Powers, and the two-Power standard as universally accepted meant that this country must have a margin of naval strength above and beyond the naval strength of such two other Powers. If that historical retrospect was a mistake, surely it was a greater mistake for the right hon. Gentleman to indulge in certain academic speculations, as that there were conceivable circumstances in which we might have a lower standard, qualifying this by adding that there were imaginable circumstances in which we might have a higher standard. But such speculations cast doubt upon our policy, the whole virtue of which depended on its being continuous and intelligible. Hon. Members who read the foreign Press would discover that debates in this House which occupied five or six hours were compressed into a paragraph of five or six lines, and such speculations, which were reported, were thus thrust into undue prominence and gave the incorrect impression abroad that our policy was variable and depended on circumstance and upon our diplomatic relations with the great European States. That nullified a great deal of the value which we had derived for many years and might continue to derive by speaking steadfastly of the two-Power standard. Why had that policy been adopted by both Parties? It was because they believed that it secured the first condition of European peace. The first condition of European peace was repose of mind among our people at home and the people of other countries abroad. In order to have that repose they must have nothing to cast doubt on the two-Power standard policy. They must say nothing, Heaven forbid that they should do anything, to shake the confidence of our friends abroad; but friendship between nations sprang, he thought, very largely from generous sentiment, from mutual admiration of each other's characteristics. We admired the French for many things, and he hoped that the French admired us for some of our national qualities. He thought they admired us for our doggedness of purpose in carrying out any kind of understanding which our honour seemed to approve. If our friends were ever to have doubt—even if the doubts were illegitimate—that all Parties in the State were not absolutely wedded to the policy of the two-Power standard as defined and understood, we should have done something unwittingly, but disastrously, to shake their confidence, and with their confidence, the basis of European peace.

MR. MENZIES (Lanarkshire, S.): The right hon. Gentleman has talked a great deal about the two-Power standard. I would like to ask him what is the two-Power standard?

MR. WYNDHAM said if the hon. Member had favoured him with his attention he would have noticed that he gave a definition of the two-Power standard. It was that the naval strength of this country should be at least equal to the strength of any other two Powers. He deprecated the arguments which had been used in the debate by persons not in the confidence of the Admiralty, namely, arguments based on a comparison of tonnage. That was the business of the Government and the Board of Admiralty. It was business which they could not with any useful result undertake in the House. What they had to believe was that no Government and no Board of Admiralty would so far betray their trust in matters which were confidential as to depart from the intelligent carrying out of a policy so devised. More than that the Committee could not do. Some hon. Members following the line of the Secretary to the Admiralty thought it was a mistake to attach so much importance to this rigid rule of thumb, and that the two-Power standard must depend upon the diplomatic situation. That was putting the cart before the horse. It would be truer to say that the amount of confidence we inspired in our friends and the amount of respect we instilled into those we could not yet call our friends depended upon the maintenance of the two-Power standard—a standard which ought to be certainly continuous and easily understood. They all knew that the Government could not take the House and the country fully into confidence; but they also knew the startling revelations that were made by Lord Rosebery some years ago about diplomatic relations which had always been discussed in diplomatic terms when we were on the verge of war. The right hon. Gentleman claimed that the reasons for the strategical disposition of the Fleets ought not to be asked for or given; but the important factor in the problem was that the people of this country were entitled to repose in the belief that their Navy was and would remain equal to the two-Power standard. That being so, what was the use in speculating about the diplomatic situation in the future? It was better to stick to the two-Power standard in a plain British sense, and state it in plain British prose, so that all might know what we meant and intended to do.

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked if the right hon. Gentleman meant a European two-Power standard, or a world two-Power standard?

MR. WYNDHAM said he thought it was far better to adhere to the term "two-Power standard." Each individual could judge for himself without being an expert. If they went beyond that they at once began to lose or at any rate to nullify in a great degree the advantage we derived from adhering simply to a two-Power standard. The speech of the Secretary to the Admiralty was a temperate speech. But it contained one unmeasured phrase about the rancorous Press campaign which had raged against the Home Fleet, a phrase in which there was an undeserved censure on the Press. The Board of Admiralty themselves, instead of following precedent and issuing a Parliamentary Paper, sent to the Press last October a document in which the Home Fleet was mentioned for the first time, thereby inviting the newspapers to discuss their policy; and that document was couched in language so vague that no one could understand it until the Secretary to the Admiralty had made his speech. Why was not that Paper circulated in the House? He did not pretend they were naval experts; but he did assert that the function of the House was to act as a jury, and, therefore, no more information should be withheld from their knowledge than was necessary in order to safeguard vital interests. The Secretary to the Admiralty had said the Admiralty should not be asked the reasons for the strategical distribution of the Fleet. But there had been a striking change—some thought a mistaken change—in the non-strategical distribution of the Fleet, as to which some explanation was desirable. As the right hon. Gentleman had reminded the Committee, our sea-going Fleet was open to criticism; it was largely composed of obsolete vessels, inadequately distributed over the globe, and behind that there was an absolutely inefficient reserve. When the late Government left office there was a sea-going line of thirty-two battleships—ships always at sea—and there was a reserve of fourteen battleships with nucleus crews. In all forty-six battleships. In the new non-strategical distribution of the Fleet there were in the Mediterranean six battleships instead of eight, in the Atlantic six battleships instead of eight, in the Channel fourteen battleships instead of sixteen, or altogether twenty-six sea-going battleships instead of thirty-two. It might be said that the Nore division of six battleships ought properly to be added to the first sea-going line. Some doubts had been expressed by naval experts as to whether those battleships could really be described as fully sea-going; but admitting that they might be counted in the sea-going line, they brought up that line to thirty-two battleships. That left to the reserve only seven battleships. Excluding the Nore division from the first line there were twenty-six battleships in the sea-going line and thirteen battleships in the reserve. Altogether there was a total of thirty-nine battleships, or a reduction of seven since the time of the late Government. That was so great a change and had attracted so much attention that he would have supposed the Secretary to the Admiralty would devote a considerable part of his speech to explaining and justifying it. But all the right hon. Gentleman had said was that he was told that in 1904 the Admiralty came to the conclusion that the strength of the sea-going Fleet was greater than strategical interests required, a hearsay statement which the hon. Member for the Fareham Division, who was on the Board of Admiralty in 1904, at once repudiated. If the Government claimed that the sea-going ships were still thirty-two, what was the object of the statement? If the sea-going ships were only twenty-six, some better justification of the change than this hearsay statement ought to be given. There seemed to be some colour for saying that this did not represent the considered policy, either of the Government or of the Admiralty. He remembered something being sent to the Press about officers being too long at sea.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee) said that the only Paper of that kind which he remembered being sent to the Press was a Board Minute addressed to the Fleet.

MR. WYNDHAM inquired if it was not addressed to the House.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON replied in the negative. It was an Admiralty Minute addressed to the Fleet.

MR. WYNDHAM said he regretted that the Paper was not given to the House. In that document they were given another reason for the change, not a strategic reason, viz., that sailors got stale if they were kept too long at sea. First the Admiralty stated that for strategical reasons the Fleet should be reduced; then that there were as many ships as ever in the first line; and finally they referred to a document in which they said it was not for a strategical reason at all, but that the change was based upon the interests of officers and sailors who got stale if they were kept too long at sea. These conflicting reasons justified all the doubts entertained in the autumn and all the criticism in the Press which the right hon. Gentleman had called "rancorous." If the right hon. Gentleman thought that any portion of the Press ought to stand up and make the *amende honourable* to him in a white sheet with a candle in its hands, then he, who associated himself with their criticism, ought to stand in a white sheet too; but he declined to do so. He expressed what he felt then, what he felt now, and what he would continue to feel until far more explanation was given of this change.

*MR. BEAUCHAMP (Suffolk, Lowestoft) thought that everybody inside or outside the House who took an interest in naval affairs would be glad that they had got outside the domain of fiction into the region of fact. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover objected to the phrase which was used by the Secretary to the Admiralty when he said that the Press campaign in the autumn was a "rancorous" one. He entirely endorsed the phrase of the Secretary to the Admiralty. He considered that that campaign was discreditable both to those who engineered it and to those who carried it on. The object of it, so far as he had been able to judge, was to cast discredit upon the present Board of Admiralty.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: And the last.

MR. BEAUCHAMP said the object more especially was to cast discredit upon the brilliant and distinguished officer and capable organiser, Sir John Fisher, who held the position of First Sea Lord. Nobody who knew the work which had been done by the present First Sea Lord would have the hardihood to deny his great ability, his inexhaustible energy, and his indomitable industry. He had infused new life and vigour into the conduct of the Department. When he alluded to the Press campaign he did not refer to more sober, and therefore perhaps more serious, criticism which had been directed against the general policy of the Admiralty from high and authoritative quarters. Those criticisms, whether just or unjust, sound or unsound, wise or unwise, were inspired, he believed, not by any petty personal motives, but by a sincere desire to maintain the best interests and traditions of the British Navy, and they were entirely distinct from those sensational paragraphs and headlines which were their regular fare during the autumn. The attempt was then made to prejudice public opinion and bring to discredit upon the Board of Admiralty, and through that Board upon the present Government, and it was partially successful, because the statements and allegations fell upon ears not unwilling or unready to think the worst of the present Government, and to believe that in their desire to effect economy they would make reductions even at the expense of the efficiency of the British Navy. He had taken the trouble to investigate the various charges, and in only one solitary instance had he found the charge substantiated by the facts. That one instance was the relegation of the "Royal Sovereign" class into a special reserve. The hon. Member for King's Lynn, in the lecture which he addressed to the Government on Tuesday, seemed to think that any stick was good enough with which to chastise the Government. He blamed them for having placed the "Royal Sovereign" class in the special reserve, and then said it would be murder or next to murder to send those ships into the fighting line and expose them to the newer vessels of any Continental country. One of the strongest allegations made was with regard to the Home Fleet. It was said that it was to be formed by denuding the Channel, Atlantic, and Mediterranean Fleets or squadrons, was to be only partially manned, and only to go out for exercise once, twice, or perhaps three times in a year. They now had the facts. The portion of the Home Fleet stationed at the Nore was to consist of six first-class battleships and six armoured cruisers, all of which were to be fully manned, and they were to go out frequently for exercise in the North Sea. Instead of a reduction in the fighting efficiency of the British Navy he thought its fighting efficiency had been thoroughly maintained and the strategical position had been enormously improved. There was one thing, however, which rather disappointed him, and that was that there was no provision, with the exception of one unarmoured cruiser, for adding to the number of our cruisers. He was very much struck by what the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean said about the question of an attack or a possible attack upon our commerce. He thought the right hon. Baronet's view was that the probability was that we should not have much to fear in future with regard to such an attack. The right hon. Baronet's opinion must always have, especially upon this subject, very great weight with every Member of the House, but this view was not the view entertained by the members of the Royal Commission.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said he had expressly stated that the danger had arisen chiefly in the last two years and more particularly in the last year.

*MR. BEAUCHAMP said that might be so, but he doubted whether the view of the right hon. Baronet was held by the Admiralty. One of the objects of the recent manœuvres was to test the arrangements for the protection of our ships of commerce. The result of those manœuvres must necessarily have been somewhat inconclusive because of their narrow area; they were rendered more so by want of co-operation on the part of shipowners. But the Admiralty were not to blame for that. The shipowners were asked to co-operate with the Admiralty and every provision was made that they should not suffer loss, as they were to be paid demurrage for any time they lost and every precaution was taken to protect them in regard to loss of ship or cargo. He could not but lament the lack of public spirit on the part of the shipowners. What was the result? In the first few days of the manœuvres no less than 55 per cent. of the merchant vessels and those representing merchant vessels were captured. The umpires pointed out that that would not have taken place if there had been a larger number engaged, but even if the percentage had been 25—if 25 per cent. of our vessels were captured during the first weeks of a war it was quite easy to understand that there would be a serious panic in this country. It must be remembered that that took place when the attacking fleet was vastly inferior to the protecting fleet and that it took place within a limited area. But if that area was extended, as it would be in the case of actual warfare, and we had to extend protection to all our trade from Canada, America, the Argentine, Australia, the far East, and through the Mediterranean, it led to the inevitable conclusion that we required more cruisers and commerce protectors. Then with regard to the docking of our ships. In his opinion the present system was uneconomical and did not tend to efficiency. At the present time a vessel was docked only once a year. The result was that its bottom became foul, the disadvantage of which was that it required a greater expenditure of coal, and there was a greater amount of wear and tear of the machinery and boilers, to enable it to get up necessary speed. In time of war our system had not only this economic disadvantage, but also stategical and tactical disadvantages. The vessel longest out of dock lagged behind when at full speed, which was a tactical disadvantage in manœuvring and a strategical disadvantage when taking up a position. Owing to having to burn more coal in order to increase their speed the radius of action of such vessels was reduced. If we docked our vessels more frequently, though there would be an increase in the expenditure for docking, such expenditure would be made up and more than made up by the reduced consumption of coal. One of the leading firms of shipowners of this country had found it necessary, and he presumed therefore economical, to dock their vessels three times a year. Speaking of the adoption in the new vessels of turbine engines, he said that, though they possessed great advantages, he was not quite certain that they had sufficient knowledge to render it absolutely certain that those advantages were not out-balanced by the disadvantages of placing such engines in battleships. He understood that battleships did not manœuvre so easily or so quickly with turbine as they did with reciprocating engines, and he suggested that that was the reason why the "Dreadnought" was placed in the Home Fleet rather than the Channel Fleet. The late Civil Lord of the Admiralty laughed.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I did not wish to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but the information that reached me was that the "Dreadnought" had exceptionally fine capabilities of manœuvring—rather in advance of other ships than the reverse.

*MR. BEAUCHAMP said he was glad that that was the case. When they were making a great change like this, they ought to be absolutely certain that they were not proceeding too fast by putting turbines into all the new ships.

*CAPTAIN HERVEY (Bury St. Edmunds) said the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, when introducing his Army Estimates, told the House that he had given the greatest importance to the opinions of his best military advisers in bringing forward his scheme. In fact he said it was a military Bill. He (Captain Hervey) would like to be quite certain that the statements which were brought before the Committee in connection with the Navy Estimates were naval statements. How did they stand at the present moment? There was a big Party opposite whose avowed main object was economy, but abroad all the big countries who were our great trade rivals had for their main object the increase of their naval strength. Between those two great forces there was first the Board of Admiralty. They were doing what they could—he spoke of the Sea Lords—to make our Fleet as strong as possible with the force at their disposal; but secondly, there was in the country, as evidenced by the Press and in the House, a large Party dead against all the reforms which the Board of Admiralty were trying to effect. They were not only dead against them in theory, but they were dead against all the details of the policy—in the description and number of ships we were building, in the distribution of the Fleet, and in the number and training of our officers and men. That was a very serious thing. The safest policy that could and ought to be pursued would be for the Government to select the very best men they could find to advise them, and then to act upon their advice. If the Government found they could not provide the money to carry out the advice which those experts put before them they ought to come to the House and say so frankly and distinctly, give their reasons for not complying with the demands made upon them, and relieve the naval officers of the responsibility which under present conditions they tried to cast on to their shoulders instead of taking it on their own. At present the country had got it into its head that if the Naval Lords were not satisfied that our Fleet was properly distributed or that the training of our officers and sailors was thoroughly carried out, they (the Sea Lords) would resign. He protested against naval officers being drawn into the political arena. Their duty was to do the work entrusted to them, and to see that it was carried out efficiently, without reference to any political considerations which might arise from what they proposed. He thought some means should be found by which Parliament could be made aware of the opinions of the naval officers. If he looked at the Estimates he found that they were signed by the full Board of Admiralty—by all the Sea Lords, the First Lord, the Secretary, and the Financial Secretary. If he looked at the explanation of the Estimates he found that it was signed "Tweedmouth." Was he to understand that it was Lord Tweedmouth's idea of the Estimates or was it the Sea Lords' idea? Personally he did not think that it was the Sea Lords' idea. He thought it was the interpretation conveying the civil aspect of the matter as far as the Government of the day was concerned. He did not think that was the right way. He suggested that if they were to be enabled to criticise the Estimates intelligently the statements of policy and any explanatory statement should be signed only by the Sea Lords. When the Estimates were then before the House the Government could defend their views against, if necessary, those of the Sea Lords. The House would then have something really to go upon. At present he did not think they had. Many of them would prefer to place naval matters above Party politics. For some time past writers in the Press had been objecting wholesale, not only to the new scheme of training of officers, but to the new scheme of training of men also ["Hear, Hear."] Hon. Members opposite said "Hear, Hear." They had entered rightly or wrongly into a big scheme of training, which was very much on a par with the big scheme brought forward for the re-organisation of the Army, and all the talk in the world would not make certain whether they were doing right or wrong. Time alone could show. He believed, however, that in entering into the scheme, which certain outside forces had compelled them to embark upon, they had gone the right way to work. He believed they were training young officers, more especially those who were to be engineers and future executive officers, in a way which would bring them together as young men, and associate them one with another through the whole course of their training for executive duty. He believed that they had entered upon a course which, as it gradually unfolded itself, would prove to be the right course. He had been doubtful when this scheme was first brought into operation. He was particularly doubtful as to whether they would get the best class of officers, by which he meant some of the cleverest men, into the engineering department. He had talked the matter over, however, with young officers now at Osborne and at Dartmouth, and he was told that in a great many cases some of the most efficient boys in the different terms were very keen about engineering. If that was the case, he believed they were starting on the right path for getting efficient officers, and that they were doing an infinitely better thing than anything which had yet been attempted to cut themselves free from the trammels of trade unions outside the service. They would no longer be at the mercy of engineering trade unions in order to obtain efficient engineer officers. The statement of the First Lord made mention of the Committee which had sat lately to inquire into the *status* of the present engineer officers. It set forth that the engineers had been led to believe that they were to receive certain advantages when the new scheme came into operation which they had not had at present. It was an open secret what some of those advantages were said to include. Practically they were to be executive officers. The young officers who were now being trained would in the future become executive officers, but when it came to giving the present engineers executive rank he thought there was no sufficient reason at the present time for altering their *status*. [AN HON. MEMBER: Will the hon. Gentleman say why?] Because the present engineer officers had not been trained to become executive officers, and that was the very best reason that he could give. Personally, and he thought he represented the opinion of the vast majority of naval officers, he did not believe that to give executive rank to the existing engineers would be a good thing for the service, and now, when they had the Estimates under consideration, and before any conclusion had been arrived at, was the time to say that he did not think it would be a good thing. After these remarks he would like to turn to the formation of the Home Fleet. It was a very difficult and thorny question to deal with. Our Fleets were divided into two main categories—first, the battleship portion, which should enable us at a moment's notice to launch the whole force of our Fleet against the enemy with the certainty of emerging victorious from the fray; and, secondly, the cruiser portion, which was for policing the seas and showing the flag, a force kept more for the prevention of war than for the making of war. There had been an immense amount written about the redistribution of the Fleet. Let them take the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Fleets. In the present circumstances of our diplomatic relations—he was only expressing his own opinion, which he dared say that neither the Secretary for Foreign Affairs nor the First Lord of the Admiralty would traverse—it seemed to him that they had reduced those two Fleets down to the very minimum at which they could possibly have two Fleets in being if they were to be effective for their work in time of war. He mentioned those two

Fleets particularly, because he could not see how they could work Fleets with less than six battleships so as to give efficient training to the flag officers and men serving in them. The Channel Squadron was very powerful, and it was very difficult for one who had not the actual disposition of the ships to say whether fourteen or sixteen battleships were sufficient for that Fleet. They had most of the latest and the best ships in the Channel Fleet, and he believed it was considered a fine Fleet and probably able to do its work if it were called upon at the present time. Then they came to the Home Fleet as at present proposed to be constituted. He really believed it could not be effective for its purpose unless, as far as the battleships were concerned, every battleship of the Home Fleet was fully manned, especially if the Mediterranean and Channel Fleets were to be reinforced from the Home Fleet, and when any ships belonging to those squadrons were in need of extensive repairs they were to be taken from the Home Fleet. It was rather difficult to say anything about foreign affairs, because one might be misinterpreted, but those who had followed recent events would know that on the 13th December we had what might have very nearly come to a scare if we had not had a really fine Navy at our back. On the 13th of December the Channel Fleet sailed for the coast of Spain, and on the same date the Atlantic Squadron sailed from Gibraltar for home. There was a significant coincidence which he would like hon. Members to bear in mind when considering what the strength of the Home Fleet should be. One of our biggest naval competitors on the 13th of December put every ship that they had to sea to ascertain in case of emergency how quickly they could be relied upon to carry out any work that might be required of them. That emergency would never occur, as far as we were concerned, if we had an efficient Home Fleet, but if we had a Home Fleet like the Secretary for War's Army which would have to go through six months training before it was ready for war that Fleet might just as well never exist. No ship was ready to go to sea and fight an enemy at four days notice if she had not had the whole of her officers and men in full touch with one another for some time previous to her being required. He protested against the ships put forward as battleships ready for war in our Home Fleet being anything but fully manned. It was his good fortune to have been the commander of a big battleship, and when he went to sea he did not suppose the House of Commons or the public knew the state of it. It was one of the Channel Squadron supposed to be ready for sea, but there were on board only half her proper complement of petty officers. Although there should not have been more than forty first-class boys on board there were no less than 187, and there were over 300 seamen on board under nineteen years of age. That ship was not ready for sea.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: What date was that?

*CAPTAIN HERVEY: The date was 1897, and the ship was the "Victorious." Unless a better answer could be given by the Admiralty as to the manner in which the Home Fleet was to be manned he was afraid it could not be regarded as being likely to be ready for sea. He did not ask the Secretary to the Admiralty to divulge the details of the complement sheets. A complement sheet was made out for every ship, and he asked that it should be adhered to. He wanted the battleships of the Home Fleet to be ready for every emergency, and if the right hon. Gentleman was able to assure him that it was so that was all he wanted done.

*MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis) said in reference to the training scheme for the Navy, that it was an extraordinarily complicated one and the best naval officers differed considerably in regard to it. No less than 225 Members of Parliament had petitioned to have the whole thing inquired into, without expressing any opinion whatever upon it. In the admirable speech of the Secretary for the Admiralty there was one feature he was glad to note had not been repeated, and that was that he had not brought into the discussion the opinions of the Sea Lords of the Admiralty. Some hon. Members contended that that was as it should be, and that the Sea Lords were in the same position as the permanent officials of the Education Board. In recent years they had had two Education Bills totally opposite in character, and still they had the same permanent officials. They did not, however, find in the case of the Education Bills that one Minister claimed that he had the permanent officials on either one side or the other. If the Sea Lords were dissatisfied they had always the remedy of resigning, and, as hon. Members were aware, it was almost without precedent for a Sea Lord not to receive upon resignation a good billet and he often got the command of a fleet. He wished to point out that the Cawdor memorandum was the third revision of that memorandum, and if hon. Members could examine the original document they would find that they were not now adhering to the opinion of the Sea Lords at the time in regard to the two-Power standard. The hon. Member for Lowestoft had complained of the absence of cruisers from the building programme of the Admiralty. The Secretary to the Admiralty had claimed the "Invincible" class of ship as battleships. The Admiralty were continually playing the confidence trick on the public by passing off a vessel for two purposes. The "Invincible" class were at one time counted as battleships and at other times as cruisers. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean had drawn specific attention to his views about cruisers, and the hon. Member for Lowestoft had also called attention to the great losses which occurred during the naval manœuvres in regard to commerce. Those manœuvres only covered a stretch of some 900 miles, but it would be impossible to protect commerce effectually unless we had a very large number of cruisers, provided the enemy utilised all their opportunities for attacking commerce. He would like to know if the Admiralty view was that it was not necessary to build any more cruisers. As a matter of fact, in the recent manœuvres he found that the red side had sixteen armoured cruisers to eight on the blue side, or 100 per cent. more. In large protected cruisers they had a superiority of 1,000 per cent. or eleven to one, whilst the proportion in small protected cruisers was three to every one of the blue for attacking commerce. Obviously there was a very large defending cruiser force provided, larger than they could hope to have in a war with any two Powers. If the view that cruisers were unnecessary had been tried, then the Red Fleet should have had no cruisers at all. The Germans were building small turbine cruisers at the rate of two a year to run 24 knots per hour. It would be a tremendous waste of force to employ large armoured cruisers to chase those small turbine cruisers, and at the same time it would be impossible to run any of the British protected cruisers over 20 knots per hour. He thought it would be necessary very soon to build more of those protected cruisers which the Admiralty abandoned under the last Government. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean had also drawn a very strong picture of how the Channel would be strewn with mines. He would remind the Committee that one of the purposes for which the Admiralty had cruisers was to hunt down mine laying vessels and make it hot for them. The only chance they had of properly defending commerce and stopping operations of mine-laying was by continually keeping their cruisers at sea, making it too hot for the enemy's vessels. On the same principle they carried on their torpedo warfare by having numerous flotillas of destroyers at sea. The duty of the new Channel Fleet under Lord Charles Beresford was to safeguard the country against raids and invasions. Lord Charles Beresford's Fleet was to consist of fourteen battleships as compared with sixteen in the German Fleet. He had four armoured cruisers as compared with three of the Germans, three small cruisers compared with six in the German fleet. He was to be given no destroyers, whereas the German fleet had fifty. It might be said that Lord Charles Beresford had the Nore division of the Home Fleet near at hand to reinforce him with six battleships, six armoured cruisers and forty-eight destroyers, but unless he was to be responsible for the training of the Home Fleet it could not be really said that they were at his disposal. They had to remember that the first blow in the war between

Japan and Russia was struck with the torpedo craft, and if Lord Charles Beresford's Fleet was to strike the first blow the destroyers should be under his command. According to the disposition of the Fleet announced in this House by the Board of Admiralty, Lord Charles Beresford was not to have any destroyers; he was to have nothing beyond the three armoured cruisers and four protected cruisers he had mentioned. The Secretary to the Admiralty asked them to compare ships as regarded age, size, armament, and numbers with those of France and Germany. He had done so in response to that appeal and he found, comparing Great Britain, France, and Germany, and taking vessels less than eighteen years old, Great Britain possessed fifty-two first-class battleships and France and Germany combined forty-nine. Those included ships built, building, and projected. His hon. friend only included ships built. That was all very well if we were going to war to-morrow, but in considering a shipbuilding programme it was necessary to consider the position three years hence, and really for the purposes of economy, which was a strong point, they should consider the position not only three, but four or five years hence, in order to get even programmes such as those of the Germans. The only result of postponing expenditure would be precisely what happened under the Liberal Government in 1893–4. In that year we had one of the smallest programmes and in 1894 we had the biggest programme that had ever been introduced. The decreasing of the shipbuilding programme now meant the unnecessary discharge of dockyard workmen and the dislocating of industry. It meant also in future with a large programme the placing of contracts at a high price instead of a low price. Taking vessels less than thirteen years old France and Germany ranked ahead of Great Britain. We had thirty-seven first-class battleships built, building, or projected, and France had Germany had forty-one; we had nineteen less than eight years old, and France and Germany had twenty-eight. Germany could build the ships of her programme just as fast as Great Britain, and our sole advantage would be against France, which could not build so rapidly. He insisted that we were only postponing expenditure if we refused to commence now to build against some of the six French battleships. Surely the Government did not intend to consider them in a lump and to lay down six all at once. They were often asked to consider the size of the ships. He did not think that any naval officer would say that to add up tonnage was to give the measure of the fighting strength. It was no advantage whatever for ships to lug about 500 tons of sheathing. That was simply a disadvantage from the fighting point of view, because extra coal had to be carried for the boilers. In modern ships 1,000 tons of armour was equal to 2,000 tons in the ships of twelve years ago. Then there was the question of armaments. He would take the theoretical perforating capacity at 5,000 yards. Great Britain had forty-eight guns in her battleships capable of perforating seventeen and a-half inch armour; France and Germany had ninety-six; we had eighty-four capable of perforating fourteen to sixteen-inch armour; France and Germany had sixteen; we had forty capable of perforating eleven to thirteen-inch armour; France and Germany had 150; we had forty capable of perforating seven to ten and a-half inch armour; France and Germany had 104. There was nothing beyond the two-Power standard about those figures. The Secretary to the Admiralty asked the House to read what Sir William White, a great naval architect, had written about the two-Power standard. But he held that it was more important to have Sir William White's views on the subject of repairs. The right hon. Gentleman said Sir William White was almost without a rival as an authority on the subject of the Navy. In the *Nineteenth Century* of April last, dealing with the question of repairs Sir William White said—

> "In gunnery, as is well known, the Navy Bill provides for building new and more powerful vessels to take the place of existing units in the Fleet when the latter attain certain ages. It is equally notorious that vessels which have been nominally replaced by new ships are taken in hand, thoroughly repaired, modernised, in some cases renamed, and kept as reserves."

The Admiralty were not attempting to modernise any vessels whatever and had not done so since 1904. They had given up reconstructing, and, to a large extent, the replacement of old tonnage. None of the "Royal Sovereign" class were to have any more repairs executed on them, and his information was that they were not to carry more than four mechanics on board. The policy of the Admiralty would be perfectly justified if they were willing to replace the old tonnage, but it could only be justified on that ground. The point where the Admiralty sham came in in this case was that they counted all these old ships as efficient, though they were not repairing or reconstructing them. They were not justified in doing that, whereas foreigners who did repair old ships by a systematic policy were justified in counting old ships. Sir Wm. White went on to say—

> "The writer's conclusion from independent investigation, is that the official estimate for the annual expenditure on repairs, maintenance and sea stores for the existing Fleet is considerably less than the amount which ought to be provided."

Therein lay the strongest condemnation of the Admiralty policy in regard to repairs. He found that the capital value of the Fleet had gone up since April, and therefore a larger amount for repairs, maintenance, stores, etc., was required. A larger amount in proportion to that increase had not been provided since then, so that the criticism which he had quoted was still equally applicable. A Labour Member had drawn attention to a passage in Lord Tweedmouth's Memorandum which showed that a larger number of ships were under repair in 1904 than was the case to-day. That, in his opinion, afforded one of the strongest condemnations of the present policy. If repairs were neglected, naturally there would be fewer ships under repair. In 1902 and 1903 the Admiralty were carrying out a systematic policy of reconstructing ships. It was that policy of reconstructing and repairing ships for the purpose of increasing their fighting efficiency which was being neglected at the present moment. It would have been only straightforward if the First Lord had pointed out that at the time referred to the Belleville boiler crisis was at its height, and that naturally a large number of vessels were under repair. That was a reason which did not operate to day. In his speech the Secretary to the Admiralty said—

> "This is almost the first occasion on which the distribution of the Fleet has engaged the attention of Parliament. I remember one other occasion, and that was at the time of the Mediterranean scare. The right hon. Gentlemen opposite were in office when that scare was engineered by very nearly the same people, or the same sort of people, as are engaged in this campaign against us."

When that statement was made, hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite expressed their view of it by bursting into laughter. On getting back to the Board of Admiralty the right hon. Gentleman might have learned that it was a distinguished Member of that Board who engineered the scare of 1904. It was that distinguished man's letters which were read at Navy League Committee meetings and hawked about in the House of Commons, and while the right hon. Gentleman thought the Admiralty was having a fling at someone else he was entirely mistaken. The distinguished Admiral who got that portion of the Fleet increased to thirteen battleships was the First Sea Lord, and since then he had wisely reduced it. The Secretary to the Admiralty in his speech also said—

> "The other Fleets are not reduced in the opinion of the Admiralty advisers below the strength proper to the situation at the present moment."

He wished to point out to the House that there was no certainty that they might not have to send battleships out to the Far East again, and therefore they must have a margin beyond the thirty-two in commission ready to go and do the work required. Just the other day after the Liberal Government came into office they had to despatch a Fleet of battleships and cruisers to coerce Turkey. Such things were constantly recurring in connection with the Empire. There was no certainty that we would not require a Fleet outside our Home and Mediterranean waters. In his speech the right hon. Gentleman also referred to the sea time of the Home Fleet. He could not profess to be well informed on that subject, but he understood that the battleships of the Home Fleet were never at sea at night. The navigators never took sights by any chance, because they were always in sight of land. That was not sea training, and the result was a loss in the training and efficiency of the officers. In February last year he ventured to forecast that the upshot would be that the number of collisions and groundings would go up. Since then no less than ten battleships had been in collision or grounded. We lost the services for a time of the "Dominion" and the "Commonwealth," and we lost the "Montagu" which was wrecked on the rocks. He maintained that we must have more battleships. He wished to refer to the way in which the battleships were distributed. Therein lay the strongest condemnation of the Admiralty policy in regard to repairs. We must have more battleships. At present we had sixty-three battleships all told, and of those forty-seven were unarmoured over a portion of the water line, and therefore a source of weakness in view of the fact that France and Germany had no battleships with unarmoured water lines. Two ships of that total were building, and nine the Secretary of the Admiralty had acknowledged as obsolete and set aside as of no further use. The Admiralty had also set aside, or were about to do so, thirteen upon which no further repairs were to be executed, so that left us with a total of thirty-nine. The "Dominion" and "Commonwealth" were under repair, and that brought the total down to thirty-seven. Four other battleships were also under repair, and thus they came down to thirty-three, of which thirty-two were in full commission. He did not think that that was a state of affairs which should be regarded by the House as at all desirable. They might come to the state of affairs when the Prime Minister Walpole, then Member for King's Lynn, was wrangling with the First Lord of the Admiralty of the day as to whether the battleship "Salisbury" should be sent out to the West Indies or not. He wished to point out a criticism which had not yet been made with regard to distribution. Three out of our four fleets consisted of only six battleships, whilst every naval officer acknowledged that in order to give a proper tactical training it was necessary to have a minimum of eight vessels in the Fleet, the most desirable number being, in his opinion, twelve. The armoured cruisers attached to the fleets were reduced from six to four, and yet for the purpose of exercising at signalling by searchlights during the daytime and wireless telegraphy practice the consensus of opinion was that six was the right number and that it could not be done properly with less. In the House of Lords it had been shown that last month a ship under repair, the "Dominion," was the only battleship in home waters. Lord Tweedmouth answered that by saying that the Fleets were only three days sail from home, but he forgot to mention that it would take them another two days to coal at Dover. They were told that these changes increased the instant readiness for war. Last December there were seven battleships, five armoured cruisers, thirteen unarmoured cruisers and also destroyers locked up in Chatham Basin. Only two big ships could get out at a tide, and it would take a week to get them all out. In reply to a letter of his in the *Morning Post* he had had several indignant protests from naval officers saying that they could not be got out of the basin in less than a fortnight. They had also been told that the Channel Fleet could be reinforced by the Home Fleet, but he remembered that the most experienced Admiral this country had had since the time of Nelson had said that in his opinion no worse policy could be pursued than that the Channel Fleet should be dependent for reinforcements on other fleets.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) said that it was the custom to deprecate criticism of the Admiralty by any one who was not a naval expert; but he thought that everyone in the House should, from a certain standpoint, be an expert so far as what might be called the co-ordination of sea-power with war strength was concerned. That was to say that no ordinary lay Member of the House ought to consider himself entitled to criticise on such questions as the strategical distribution of the fleets; but they ought to be able to offer an opinion as to how the policy put forward by the representatives of the Admiralty affected the country and the Empire at large. He wished to put forward one or two points which he thought were worth consideration. They were not suggested from any standpoint of petty criticism, but from considerations which had exercised more minds than his own after the recent explanation of the right hon. Gentleman. For instance, the Secretary of the Admiralty stated a short time ago that the Home Fleet would have sea-training equal to about 70 per cent. of that of a sea-going fleet, and that the sea-time of our Fleet as a whole stood to that of a certain foreign Navy as 3·25 to one. A question was asked of the Secretary to the Admiralty as to the amount of coal used by the fleets of different nations, but the right hon. Gentleman deprecated any inquiry into that particular phase of the problem. But it bore upon the question of the training which our Home Fleet received and the amount of time that that Fleet should be at sea in order to make it efficient as a striking force. In 1905–6 the estimated cost of coaling the British Fleet was £1,261,000, and of the German Fleet £676,083. The German Fleet was about one-third of the strength of the British Fleet, and the sum spent in coaling one half. If that coal was not spent in manœuvres at sea, how was it spent? The fact was that Germany differed from England absolutely in her policy regarding the training of her Fleet. Germany believed that the policy pursued in regard to our Home Fleet was not a wise policy. She believed that every ship she had should be in full commission, capable of being sent to sea as a striking force at any moment. If the figures which he had quoted were to be relied upon at all, they showed that some explanation was due from the Secretary to the Admiralty as to the effectiveness of the Home Fleet. In 1900 Germany took the strongest exception to the policy of England, that the Reserve Fleet was a fleet which could be relied upon as sufficiently powerful in the event of the outbreak of war to act as a striking force. The Admiralty, both in the past and now through its representatives in Parliament, had taken a different view. It was not for him to suggest that that policy was not a good one, since both the last and the present Governments were committed to it; but the Committee ought to have a clear explanation from the Secretary to the Admiralty as to the policy in regard to the Home Fleet. The hon. Member behind him had cited the case of the "Victorious," which had been sent to sea utterly unfit as a striking force in time of war. He asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he considered the ships of the Home Fleet were equivalent to ships in full commission and would be useful as a striking force at the outbreak of a war. His hon. friend the Member for Fareham, who spoke on behalf of the Opposition, had pointed out by suggestion as well as by illustration that the Home Fleet, though having a full complement of crews and all stores on board, would still not be equal to a sea-going fleet and could not possibly be as effective in time of war as ships in full commission. He thought the Secretary to the Admiralty would do well to clear up doubts which existed in the minds of many of them as to the power and effectiveness of the Home Fleet. The point raised by the hon. Member who had just spoken was well worthy of consideration. The hon. Member had suggested that although we had withdrawn our Fleet from the China Sea, it was possible that we might have to send a fleet there at any moment. At the present time, as it happened, Japan cared for us in that sea and bore the burden of our interest there. But at the same time we had not been able to reduce out Fleet by a single ship in consequence of Japan's protecting our common interests. But supposing war broke out to-morrow and we had to send to the East a number of ships, we should have to detach them from the Atlantic or the Mediterranean Squadrons, or from the Home Fleet. In that case, if at the present time we were supposed to have sufficient strength in those waters, what would be our position if we withdrew a number of ships to go to Eastern waters to protect our interests there? A good many hon. Members seemed to think that we were in an era of comparative peace, and because that was so we ought to reduce the Navy. A statement made by M. Clemenceau in this connection was very interesting. He said, on 17th October, that no peace was possible without strength. When, he added, he came into office he believed that all the European nations were at one in their desire for peace, but almost immediately, without any provocation on their part, a storm of calumny broke over their heads and they had to ask themselves "Are we prepared?" He did not think the era of peace was upon us, and anybody who took into contemplation the state of Europe could not think so. As to Japan and Russia, he did not think the state of things had changed, although at present Japan had the predominance of power. There was some friction the other day between Japan and the United States, not enough to lead to a war, but from lesser incidents war had arisen. There was also danger of disturbance in Austria and some other parts of Europe, and so long as there was danger of war it was not sufficient if this country had less than a preponderating power over the two-Power standard. There was nothing occult in that two-Power standard and it could be easily understood. It meant that we must be equal to any two Powers in the world with a margin of 10 per cent. over. Hon. Members seemed to think and Ministers to suggest that, because amiable relations were subsisting between England and other nations, therefore we need not increase our strength; but if he remembered aright there were no unamiable relations existing between this country and other countries in 1894. All the same, however, the Liberal Government then in power, because we had three battleships building and Germany six, projected a programme of seven battleships, six cruisers, and other vessels. Since then both Parties had been responsible, and our policy had been to go on from strength to strength, and we had accepted the two-Power standard in order to maintain our position as a great sea Power and to meet the progress made by other Powers. That was a policy which we could adopt and define without being in the least out of sympathy with a desire for the friendliest relations. If we went to The Hague Conference saying that we were reducing our Navy we should go upon an absolutely false basis, because it was only the strongest nation with the largest Navy that could properly make any such request to the other nations there assembled. If we said that we were reducing the expenditure upon the Navy because the burden was too great, he thought the effect upon other nations would not be what we desired. It was only the strongest nation at the height of her shipbuilding power and at the moment when she was supreme in regard to her Navy which could properly come before the other nations and say—"We are prepared to limit our programme if you are prepared to limit yours." If the Prime Minister went into The Hague Conference under present circumstances, however much we might desire to decrease armaments, we were not likely to achieve our object. No one would suggest that the attempt ought not to be made, but he thought we were not yet sufficiently in the temperate zone of international candour and sympathy to secure its success. Nations were proverbially selfish, and this nation, so far as its relations with its Colonies throughout the world were concerned, ought in its own interests and theirs to be selfish. If we laid our cards upon the table when we were at the greatest of our strength our prospect of success would be greater than if we reduced our force. If our cards were withheld on the other hand, it was perfectly well known how we stood in regard to naval power as compared with other countries. If in our great strength, however, we laid our cards upon the table foreign nations would know that this nation was prepared to bear the greatest burden that could be laid upon it, and if necessary to load itself with the greatest National Debt possible to carry out the duties imposed upon it by its Empire. If we went in that spirit we were much more likely to receive favourable consideration in European affairs than if we went in anything like a spirit of timidity or uncertainty as to the intention of this country to keep itself in the position it had occupied since the days of Napoleon. We must be safe; if we were not there was no doubt we should be sorry for it. He thought they ought to have some more explicit information as to the distribution of the Home Fleet than they had yet had. The right hon. Gentleman said that certain first-class battleships of a new type were to be retained in the Home Fleet, but if any ships of the seagoing fleets, such as the Atlantic or Mediterranean, were withdrawn for repairs their place was to be taken by these first-class battleships. That would weaken the Home Fleet which the right hon. Gentleman had represented as sufficient, but not too sufficient, for our needs in time of difficulty. It was not always easy to define a time of difficulty, and it was hardly possible that there could be any European naval war without our being drawn into it. Prince Hohenloe in his memoirs stated that on two occasions in his experience when Europe was on the verge of war, if war had broken out England would have been brought in. He took it that the Home Fleet should be just as able to strike to-morrow as she would be to strike a year from now if a European war broke out. Lord Portsmouth, speaking in another place, inquired who would expect that the Home Fleet would be required to go to war merely on the receipt of a telegram, or who would expect that the declaration of war would fall like a bolt from the blue? In other words, he meant that it must be preceded by strained relations with the country involved. But that did not always follow. Everyone knew that in such cases there might be diplomatic negotiations for a number of months and then war suddenly ensue. What had happened before was likely to occur again. But our Home Fleet could not go to war to-morrow. The third division of the Fleet would only perform services, coaling and so on, to the main Fleet. The second division, with nucleus crews, might be able to go to sea in the course of twenty-four hours, but they would have had no experience under their officers or of manœuvring for any period of time, without which no ship could possibly be an effective striking item of a fleet of war. The Atlantic Fleet, the Channel Fleet, and the Mediterranean Fleet could go to war to-morrow, but the Home Fleet, was not in the same position. If the right hon. Gentleman told the Committee that our strength was so great that the Home Fleet need not be in perfect training, or perfectly ready, they would accept that assurance. But, as had been pointed out, if war broke out we should not have six months in which to make ready the Home Fleet. The blow would be struck at once, and the impact would be tremendous. The blow would be struck long before the ships of the Home Fleet could be ready for active service or to stand beside the Atlantic or the Mediterranean Fleet in the attacks to be made on the enemy. It was with great modesty that he put these points to the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. MURRAY MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs) said the right hon. Member for Dover had stated that we ought to adhere inflexibly to the two-Power standard. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean by that what was really a two-Power standard, or the two-Power standard with a margin, which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition on a former occasion suggested should be the measure of our strength? He (Mr. Macdonald) desired to move to reduce the Vote by 8,000 men. He believed the strength of the two next most powerful navies in the world was 96,000 men, and it was proposed by this Estimate to vote 128,000. We had, therefore, an excess of 34,000. That was in fact an excess that made our strength equal to a three-Power standard. Was that necessary? He would repeat the question he had put on a previous occasion—what was there in the international situation to justify the maintenance of such an enormous establishment as was proposed in the present Estimates? If his right hon. friend would satisfy him on that point he would most heartily support the proposals of the Estimate. It was the boast of the Party opposite that during the last few years of their administration they had pursued a policy of peace which had resulted in a more peaceable outlook for this country than had been enjoyed for the last forty years. He believed the present Government continued to pursue that policy. But though the policy was admirable and though the country as a whole must be grateful to those who had been responsible for it, it had not had the consequences which the country was entitled to expect should follow from it. What was the use of our policy, of our diplomacy, or of our cordial understandings if they were to have no effect in reducing our enormous establishments. He maintained that, by our present expenditure, we were depriving peace of all its advantages and anticipating the energies of war whenever they might be required. He expressed the opinion that we should be much more formidable in war if, instead of following the present policy which resulted in these swollen Estimates, we reduced expenditure and strengthened the spirit and promoted the real greatness of our people. His right hon. friend had said that he regarded Vote 8 as the Vote that really determined all the other Votes. He found that a little difficult to follow, but he was quite willing for the moment to accept this view, and when they came to discuss Vote 8 he would move a reduction upon it. In the meantime he would like an assurance from the right hon. Gentleman on two points. The first was that the shipbuilding programme would not be proceeded with until the Committee had had an opportunity of expressing an opinion on it; and the second was that that opportunity should be given before the meeting of the Colonial Conference. If he received those two assurances he would not press his Motion to a division. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That 120,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the said Services."—(*Mr. Murray Macdonald.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) with a view of concentrating attention upon certain questions which he particularly desired the Secretary of the Admiralty to reply to when he came to make his second statement on the Estimates of which he was in charge. He, therefore, would absolve himself and he hoped the Committee would absolve him from any examination of the particular reduction just moved. He would, however, make this comment upon the hon. Member's speech. The hon. Member appeared to attach no value to the friendship of or alliances with foreign nations unless those friendships or alliances immediately produced an effect in diminishing the Estimates laid on the Table on the House.

***Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD**: I do not like to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I do attach great importance to those alliances, but it has hitherto been the policy of this country to regard all alliances of that kind as being a cause for the reduction of our armaments.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR thought the hon. Gentleman would see that that was a singularly misleading and untruthful way of looking at questions of foreign policy. It had a double disadvantage whether they looked at it from the side of the gain of a foreign alliance or the side of the security of the Empire. In the first place, the hon. Gentleman was going to effect this result. He openly avowed that the end to be gained by the alliance was the reduction of that effective force the possession of which was the real reason, of course, that the foreign nation desired our co-operation. The hon. Gentleman looked forward to a period when the Government was not going to rely on a Fleet and an Army but on the spirit of the people. Well, he had always regarded an Army and a Navy as the spirit of the people in an organised and effective form. If they did not organise it he could assure the hon. Gentleman that the spirit of the people, however admirable and patriotic, and he hoped it would be both, would never have any value for the defence of these shores. Nor would it give the smallest inducement to any other nation to think that their weakness would be any in way protected from agression by our assistance.

***Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD** said he was sorry to interrupt, but his contention was that we might have establishments so large as to crush the spirit of the people and diminish its real greatness, and that by reducing expenditure we would really add to the greatness and strength of the people in the long run.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said that was the same argument in a new shape; but he did not wish to detain the Committee by entering into an argument on broad generalities on the present occasion, because he wished to concentrate his observations on a more detailed view of the Estimates before them. In the debate of the previous day it was almost inevitable that a good many speakers should refer, not to the Board of Admiralty, or to the Government as responsible for the Board of Admiralty, but to the Sea Lords, the professional advisers constituting that Board. For his part he greatly regretted all such references. It was quite true that there was at the head of the Naval Board, at this moment, an Admiral of great genius and original powers, whose services to the country, in his judgment, had been very great indeed; but they had not got to deal with either the Sea Lords at the Admiralty, or any particular Sea Lord; it was the Government, and the Government alone, who were responsible for the naval policy of the country. The late Government were responsible for the Estimates as long as they were in power, and that responsibility had been transferred *in toto* to their successors in office, who, in his opinion, could not shelter themselves under the authority of the Sea Lords, except in purely technical matters. Nor ought any attack upon the naval policy of the country to be directed against the Sea Lords; it should be directed against those, and those only, who were really responsible to this House. That, he believed, to be a sound constitutional doctrine. There was one omission of considerable importance in the statement of the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Estimates, which might have been unintentional, but which he thought it would be desirable he should fill up when he came to it again—he referred to the question of cruisers. There was no reference in the Estimates to any cruiser, except a single unarmoured cruiser, probably to be used in connection with torpedo destroyers. If that was so, if there was no provision of cruisers for the protection of commerce, or as an integral part of a fleet in being, it was a singular omission, and he thought justification of it ought to be given in a very explicit form. A second question related to docks for the accommodation of and for repairing the new and very large ships now in the process of creation. In 1904 the Admiralty inaugurated a new system under which they found themselves the happy possessors of a great deal more harbour accommodation than they previously required, in proportion to the vessels they had to accommodate. But the increased size of our ships now carried with it some necessary cost on the other side, because it was absolutely necessary that we should have docks of a size to take in the new vessels—docks not merely here and there, but in as large numbers as we could command, and in situations where they could be conveniently made use of after, say, a naval action. He understood the Government proposed to mark time in regard to the new works at the Firth of Forth, where there were to be new docks capable of accommodating the biggest battleships, and of immediately supplying them with the necessary repairs. If there should be a battle in the North Sea, in which the Channel Fleet were engaged, say off Newcastle or off the Forth, where were the nearest docks in which our vessels could be fitted, and how many such docks were there? He was referring, of course, to the biggest ships, the new and biggest type of ship, for which this special accommodation was more particularly required. And such docks as we had, were they always available for the purposes for which they were required? He was informed that the two docks of adequate size at Portsmouth were not always available for repairing ships, because they could not be used at all states of the tide, and on all occasions. In connection with that question, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would refer to the reduced Estimate for loan works. If the reduction was due to the fact that we were abstaining from building these new docks, which were really a vital necessity for the accommodation of our fleet, it was a policy the Government would do well to reconsider. The hon. and gallant Member for King's Lynn had made an explicit statement that the Germans had in full commission a larger fleet of destroyers in home waters than we had in full commission in home waters. That had given him rather a disagreeable surprise, and he would like to have the Admiralty view upon it. With regard to the Home Fleet at the Nore, he understood the policy of the Government to be this. They started with arranging their ships in two series, constituting the first and second lines of defence. The first line of defence was of sea-going ships with full crews, ready in every respect to meet an enemy and constantly practising in blue water. The second line was manned with nucleus crews, and it was truly believed that they could be made fit for sea in a relatively short space of time. But the fact that these nucleus crews were always on board, and went out and practised, made them far more effective and more to be relied upon than was the case under the old system, which required entirely new crews in case of emergency. That plan of the Admiralty was started by the late Government and continued by the present Government. But the present Government had introduced a modification of the second line, and it was on that modification and development of the second line that he desired to have a little further information than they possessed at present. The advantage of having only a nucleus crew of two-fifths was of course a financial advantage. It was much cheaper to have the ships in harbour, practising occasionally only with crews of two-fifths, than if they were at sea with their full complement. The Government had gradually been forced, with regard to some of the best ships, to increase that nucleus until the word "nucleus" became wholly inaccurate. Twelve cruisers had got their full crews. They had risen out of the nucleus crew state, gradually, until they had now a crew as large as if they belonged to one of the sea-going fleets, and had all the advantages which naturally accrued from practising in blue water. Therefore, he supposed, as far as wages and food were concerned, and in short everything except coal, these twelve ships with full crews must be as costly as if they belonged to the sea-going Fleet. If they were as costly, were they as efficient? As he understood the right hon. Gentleman, they were not so efficient as they would be if they went to sea. He did not use that expression? What he said was that they had 70 per cent. of the practice of the sea-going fleets. As efficiency depended so much upon practice, if it was said a force had seven-tenths of the practice another force had, it was not an unfair inference that there was seven-tenths of the efficiency. If ships were equal in material strength and turn of speed, it would naturally be supposed that with sea-going ships having 30 per cent. more practice there would be 30 per cent. more efficiency. If anything like that were true—he was not arguing upon the mathematical accuracy of the figures—was it a wise or prudent course to have these ships, which were not exactly in the first line and not exactly in the Reserve. but had their full crews and were almost as costly as the first line? It might be capable of explanation, but it had not been explained, and he believed it was because the public had not understood the Government view that so much excitement was aroused during the winter and the early months of the present year, and which he hoped a full discussion of these Estimates would allay. An hon. Gentleman opposite had been very indignant at attacks made upon the Admiralty, but the Committee would in justice allow that the Opposition had done nothing to embarrass the Government or pour upon them undeserved or unnecessary criticism. An explanation was required of what seemed to be a new anomaly. Formerly there was a sea-going Fleet and a Reserve Fleet, and now there was added something which was almost as expensive as a sea-going Fleet and yet had not the efficiency of the sea-going Fleet, and he desired to know what justification the Government had for introducing that new element, which was in neither the first nor the second line of defence, but which was attended by the inconveniences inevitably attaching to both categories. The only other point was one upon which he raised a question on Tuesday, whether anything was being done to show our flag under the new naval system in distant ports or on the coasts of barbarous or semi-civilised countries in some such manner as obtained before the recent reforms. Those reforms were carried out in the direction of economy, and he believed in the direction of fighting efficiency, but they carried with them corresponding weakness so far as diplomatic efficiency was concerned, and he wished to know if the Government were considering that matter or had any statement to make on it.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Patrolling?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said what he meant was this. In the old days we had an immense number of ships not very effective as fighting machines and not very effective as cruisers, for they were deficient in speed, they were not good for war, and from that point of view were rightly got rid of. But those ships were eminently convenient and very useful when the Foreign Office wanted to show our flag in some quarter of the globe or off a Crown Colony desiring help in a local emergency. There used to be a large number of those ships, but they had been destroyed and nothing had been put in their place. Now that we had only efficient fighting ships, all we could do was to send one of those, although not required for naval warfare in the sense understood in connection with a contest between civilised Powers. He would not suggest a return to the old system, but it would seem that we must submit to some slight expenditure which would not add to our fighting efficiency, but which would conduce to peace and good government in distant parts of the Empire and be a security against small risings and small difficulties and have the effect of making the power of the Empire understood by far distant communities who otherwise might infer, never seeing our flag, that we were not prepared to support our interests in those waters. The Admiralty must have been considering that difficulty, and he would be grateful not for a full statement on the point, but for any indication of the views of the Government upon it. He put these questions, not now arguing upon the Government policy, and perhaps the Secretary to the Admiralty would give the views of the Government upon them.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said he would gladly accede to the request of the right hon. Gentleman, though it would be admitted that he could not be expected to give full answers to all the questions without notice. If he failed to give all the information desired, he would supplement his answers on a later day. The first question of the right hon. Gentleman was, "Why were no cruisers included in this year's Estimates?" He might ask the right hon. Gentleman in return, "Why were there no cruisers in last year's Estimates, which the late Government drew up?" He thought it would be a sufficient answer to say that there were no new cruisers in this year's programme for the same reason that there were no new cruisers in last year's programme.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he would have thought that the omission last year would have been an additional reason for including the item in the present year. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to treat the question in a controversial sense.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said he did not wish to import any controversial feeling. So far as he understood the question, no new cruisers were proposed because the Admiralty were advised they were not necessary. Seven armoured cruisers were in course of construction, and there was no new demand except for an unarmoured cruiser to act as mother ship to destroyers. At the moment, without consulting his colleagues, he could not add to the information on this subject already given to the House. The question of repairing accommodation he would not now go into, but would be quite prepared to deal with it later. As to how many docks were capable of taking the "Dreadnought," he could not say without consulting his professional advisers; he would deal with it later on. The question of works he postponed to Vote 10. The reductions came about by revision and reduction of items and postponement of others, the burden of which would fall on future years. An explanation would be more convenient in connection with the naval works policy. Vote 10 would be taken upon a day—not too late—to suit the convenience of hon. Members opposite. Upon the subject of German destroyers, he did not hear the statement of the hon. Member for King's Lynn, and was not, therefore, prepared to say if it was correct or not.

MR. BELLAIRS said he was referring to the exact state of affairs last December when he said there were more destroyers in full commission in home waters for the Germans than there were in this country.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that while adequate recognition had been given to the sound constitutional doctrine laid down many times in this House that the distribution of the Fleet was for the Admiralty, and for the Admiralty alone, and that their reasons could not always be divulged, because they were diplomatic and strategical, a great deal had been said already by way of criticism and by way of interrogatory which was only veiled criticism about the constitution of the Home Fleet. The particular point raised by the right hon. Gentleman appeared to be this. He said that the Home Fleet was only to have 70 per cent. of the sea time of what were called the sea-going fleets. Of course they were all sea-going fleets in a sense, and none of them were sea-going in a sense. They were not always at sea. They spent a great deal of time in harbour. He did not suppose that the Mediterranean Fleet on the average spent more than 125 days at sea in the year, and ten years ago the average was about seventy-five days a year. At any rate, the fact was that the new Home Fleet in all its branches would have about 70 per cent. of the sea time of the other Fleets which were, properly or improperly, called sea-going. It would have more sea time than some of the sea-going Fleets of four or five years ago. The right hon. Gentleman asked whether, if the Home Fleet ships were only to have 70 per cent. of the sea time of the rest of the Fleet, there would not be a chance of their having only 70 per cent. of their efficiency. He did not know how that would work out as a rule of three sum. The assumption underlying it was that the only element to be taken into consideration was that of sea time. He would not admit until he had better proof that a Fleet which had 70 per cent. of the other's sea time had only 70 per cent. of the other's efficiency. That was only a partial view of the case. What he had to say in answer to the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion was that the Home Fleet, consisting of the powerful Nore Division at the head and with the two other divisions behind it, and with the amount of sea time it would have, taken in conjunction with the sea-going fleets, would result in the production of a Navy as a whole much stronger and more efficient and having on the average more sea-time than the Navy before this new development. The right hon. Gentleman had said rightly that so far as the Nore Division was concerned, and so far as the fully-manned ships were concerned, the result must be that there could be no saving on Vote 1. That, he thought, might be taken for granted. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had correctly indicated that the only quarter in which a saving might be expected was in coal consumption. He had tried, but had not been able to satisfy himself what the amount of that hypothetical or possible saving might be. The right hon. Gentleman had adverted to the fact that two or three years ago a great scrapping took place under his own auspices. The result had been that if the efficiency of the British Navy had been triplicated, as the right hon. Gentleman said it was, for war purposes, it had also been, accordingly to him, weakened for certain peace purposes. He had asked what they were going to do. Well, the policy of scrapping the Navy was the right hon. Gentleman's policy—he was not challenging or denouncing it—and he would have thought that with his present views he might have been expected to have an answer ready, and if he had an answer ready he was sure he would have suggested to him what he ought to recommend the Admiralty to do.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he might remind the right hon. Gentleman and the Committee that he said the other day that this very problem was under consideration when the late Government left office, and it would no doubt have been dealt with had they remained in office. When they made an enormous change in their system, as they did in 1904–5, it had collateral consequences all of which were not necessarily foreseen at the time, and they met them as the necessities showed themselves. All he asked was how the Government were meeting them.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said he was not trying to pick a quarrel with the right hon. Gentlemen's question, and he only sought to answer it in the spirit in which it had been asked. The right hon. Gentleman had asked how they were going to supply the places of those small ships which formerly performed police duties in outlying portions of the Empire. The fact he believed to be this. The question had been mooted, quite informally as yet, by several of the other departments of the Government—the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the India Office. He was not aware of that when asked a question on the subject the other day. The belief, in fact the assertion, of the Admiralty was that all demands of the departments had up to this time been adequately met. That was part of the answer he gave to the question the other day. He was told that in point of fact there had been a larger showing of the flag, and by larger ships, than ever took place under the old system. But whether that was so or not, whether that was sufficient or not, the question of showing the flag had been raised, although only informally on the part, he thought, of all the great departments interested in it, and the Admiralty in answer had expressed entire willingness to consider the best means of meeting those demands. He fancied that the immediate result would be the appointment of a Departmental Conference or Committee to consider the whole question. He had answered to the best of his ability the five questions put to him by the right hon. Gentleman. He only wished to refer to one personal matter to which the right hon. Gentleman had drawn attention. He had spoken of the attacks which had been made on his distinguished friend Sir John Fisher. As to the comment made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover on what he had said with reference to the rancorous Press campaign, he wished to say that when he spoke of that matter he was not thinking of the attacks on the Admiralty as a corporation, nor was he by any means thinking of the attacks on the Government as a whole, or on individual members of the Government. What he had in his mind was a perfectly villainous sentence—an atrocious sentence levelled at the Sea Lords at the beginning of the campaign and imputing dishonourable motives to them. That was the sort of language he had in his mind. He would have sent for the paper if he had known that the matter was to be referred to. He was quite sure that if he showed the paper to the right hon. Gentleman he would at once say that he could by no means defend that kind of warfare. One daily paper had distinguished itself, and also a weekly paper which in other days harmlessly devoted itself to the psychology of dogs and the theology of women, and which had now turned its attention less harmlessly to naval affairs.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) hoped that before the debate closed the right hon. Gentleman would give the Committee some more information in regard to the question of cruisers. It was not an adequate answer to the inquiries that had been made to say that cruisers were not being built now because they were not required this year. Was it true that cruisers were being built by foreign governments? The hon. Member for King's Lynn, who was an expert, had given the Committee the information that foreign Powers were building fast and powerful cruisers, and he pressed the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty to give a more reasoned explanation of the attitude of the Admiralty in not laying down any fresh cruisers. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman in his reply would also deal with the question of dock accommodation. He believed that for ships of the "Dreadnought" class we had three or four docks at Plymouth, and two locks at Portsmouth in the entrance to the basin which could be used as docks. ["No, no."] Perhaps his recollection was at fault. We had docks at Plymouth and also at Portsmouth which could only be used at inconvenient intervals. Was it not urgent that we should begin to build on the East Coast a dock capable of accommodating those large ships, instead of postponing what was designed to be carried out at Rosyth? He did not think that it ever was the intention of the Admiralty immediately to carry out the whole Rosyth scheme of a naval base, but to make it capable of extension. But it was urgent that we should have a dock on the East Coast sufficiently large to take in those large vessels. If there were in existence private docks of that capacity he would like to know whether they were accessible at all states of the tide and whether they would be available when the Government needed them. Then, as to the Nore Division of the Home Fleet, his right hon. friend had said that many of the ships composing it had been withdrawn from the Mediterranean Fleet, and that it would be as expensive as a sea-going fleet, except as regarded coal consumption. He believed that that was true, and that the saving of coal would be very small compared with that of a sea-going fleet. The question was whether they would not sacrifice more in efficiency than they would save in money He had spent five years at the Admiralty and he remembered a well-known Admiral who said that he never would be a party to refusing expenditure on coal, because that expenditure was the measure of the preparation of the Fleet for war. Was the saving which the Admiralty proposed to make on coal worth the having? He, himself, thought that they were paying too high a price for it; and that was a point which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty had not dwelt upon at all.

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. LAMBERT, Devonshire, South Molton) said that the reason why the Admiralty were not laying down cruisers was that they had got three great cruisers of the "Invincible" class building, and the Board of Admiralty, having surveyed the building programme of foreign Powers, saw no necessity for laying down more at present.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked if that was sufficient as against the programme the foreign Powers were now laying down.

*MR. LAMBERT said that with regard to the programmes which the foreign Powers had decided upon, the Admiralty felt that it would be sufficient to consider what they proposed to do during the next three or four years. They were not contemplating what might happen in 1920. They had at the present moment several cruisers, which would meet the situation. With regard to docks, there were five Government docks in the country, capable of taking the largest type of vessels. There was also a good number of private docks. Of the five Government docks there were four (including a lock) at Keyham, and one at Portsmouth. In regard to Rosyth, that question was very explicitly dealt with in the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty. They were expending £10,000 in completing the preliminary plans and investigations which were necessary before the work there could be proceeded with. The engineers who were there would remain for the present. The matter was a very difficult one, and, as the Committee would see, it was essential that they should proceed with caution. There was another question about the Home Fleet, which required clearing up. The Leader of the Opposition had said they were only giving seven-tenths of sea-going time to the Home Fleet, and he referred to the Nore Division. The Nore Division was to include six battleships, six cruisers, and forty-eight destroyers fully manned. The explanation of the remark of the right hon. Gentleman was that that squadron, being the Home Fleet, would not leave Home waters, and therefore would not be at sea as much as the Channel and Atlantic Fleets. The Channel Fleet went the other day to Lagos, and if the Home Fleet manœuvred in Home waters they would not be at sea as long as the Channel Fleet. But in reality it was intended that the Home Fleet should be as efficient as any seagoing fleet in the Empire. He thought he need not say anything about the suggestion made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite that they should have a Naval Lord signing a statement made by the First Lord of the Admiralty. That was sufficiently dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition. Of course they desired at the Board of Admiralty to take full responsibility and not to single out any particular member, however distinguished he might be, for special responsibility. That was a sound constitutional doctrine which would certainly be followed by the present Board. He might say in passing that he was very glad indeed to hear from the hon. and gallant Member, who was an expert in these matters, a warm commendation of the proposed system of training officers. Such commendation coming from the hon. and gallant Gentleman would be a great encouragement to the Board of Admiralty. His hon. friend the Member for Lowestoft had raised the question of docking the ships. They were usually docked once a year, but the torpedo boat destroyers and such like craft were docked every six months. The whole question however was being gone into very carefully, and if necessary the big ships would be docked oftener. He could have said a great deal about the Press campaign and the regrettable change of policy, as the right hon. Member for Dover called it, in founding the Home Fleet, but he would only say that the change was suggested to the Government by their skilled advisers.

MR. WYNDHAM said he had specially guarded himself from expressing an opinion on the strategic distribution of the Fleet. But under the old system, besides the sea-going fleet of thirty-two battleships, which was the same number as at present (including the six at the Nore), there were fourteen battleships in the second line with nucleus crews, bound to be at sea for a certain stated time every year, and ready to go to sea in twenty-four hours; but under the new system, if they added the Nore squadron to the seagoing line they had only seven battleships in anything like an immediate state of preparation for the Reserve. That gave an apparent diminution of the Reserve, which had not been fully explained. He would like to know what there was in the Special Commission ships which made the seven ships in the Home Fleet (not including the six at the Nore) as good as the fourteen battleships which were in the old Special Reserve.

MR. LAMBERT said that, of course, he did not intend to suggest that the formation of the Home Fleet had added battleships to the Navy. But they had not taken seven battleships from the Navy. The Admiralty had decided to distribute the Fleet in the most strategic manner. They must be the best judges, and they had the sole responsibility for the distribution of the Fleet. With regard to the right hon. Gentleman's question about the fleet in Special Reserve, the First Lord's statement said—

> "Certain vessels of older date had hitherto been described as in Special Reserve. In future such vessels will be kept fit for service, and provided with crews sufficient to keep the machinery in good order, and the ships ready for the duty required of them."

That, of course, was a great improvement on the old system when those ships had no crews at all, and that was one of the advantages that they derived from the Home Fleet.

*__SIR J. BRUNNER__ (Cheshire, Northwich) seconded the Motion of the hon. Member for Falkirk Burghs. He did not propose to go into details or figures, for he was much impressed by what fell from the right hon. Member for Dover when he warned those who were not experts against entering upon details. He had at all times great regard for the advice of the right hon. Gentleman, and he had a greater regard for that advice since he had witnessed the gallant struggle made by the right hon. Gentleman's Leader with those details. He heard a night or two ago a chance scrap of conversation between two Members of the House who were talking together on their way to the Liberal lobby. One of them said, "These fellows care nothing about the Navy if they can only keep their taxes down." For himself he was not concerned at the moment about keeping his taxes down, and he did not think that he could have any hope of doing so in this Radical House of Commons. He had witnessed some scenes in the precincts of the House which were scandalous because of the unholy joy expressed by his nearest and dearest friends when they talked of their hope of hitting him by means of a graduated income-tax. His only chance was to wait until the next Tory Government came in when they would go in for broadening the basis of taxation, which to his mind meant making the poor pay more in order that the rich should pay less. His object was not to reduce his taxes, but to have the money raised by taxation better spent. There was so much to be done for the people of the United Kingdom at the common cost that there was nothing to hope for in the way of reduction of taxation except through the gradual growth of income through the increase of population itself. His object was to aid and support as far as he could the Prime Minister in his wish expressed in a never-to-be-forgotten speech in December, 1905, when he held before them the idea that our country should be at the head of a league of peace. In his opinion never had a Ministry started with a loftier aim, and he thanked the Prime Minister from the bottom of his heart for that declaration.

He asked the Committe to lay down, however, that the Navy Estimates were not in consonance with that declaration of the Prime Minister. For many years both great Parties, indeed all Parties in this House, had been agreed that our Navy should be sustained on a two-Power standard, but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had spoken of making a plain British statement which he appeared to think would appeal to plain British intellects. He thought the right hon. Gentleman ought to take the warning that had been addressed many times to theologians and which should also be addressed to politicians, and that was not to use words in a non-natural sense. The right hon. Gentleman had talked about equality with a margin, but the plain British intellect did not understand a two-Power standard which meant a Navy with a margin of 30 or 50 or 80 per cent. above the combined fleets of any two other nations. The two-Power standard met with universal consent both in this House and out of it. To our great national misfortune that standard had been more and more widely departed from, mainly under the guidance of the present Leader of the Opposition. He at any rate claimed to press the view that all expenditure beyond the two-Power standard was worse than waste. If the two-Power standard was the ideal of patriots in days gone by, why should it not be so now? Let the Committee consider for a moment the changes that had taken place since 1895. Japan, the next great naval Power, was our ally. France, the next, was our friend, and all he would say about Russia was that our relations with her were better than they used to be. That they might be still better was a prayer to which he said "Amen" with all his heart. He thought our Navy was infinitely larger than was necessary for a two-Power standard and his dearest wish was to go back to that standard. He read these Estimates with a bitter regret which had not been lessened by the promise to strike off one "Dreadnought" if that proposal met with a favourable response at The Hague Conference. He still hoped his right hon. friend would enlarge that offer. As he read the figures of a two-Power standard and the figures given by the Financial Secretary in describing the Navy we should have three years hence there was a margin far larger than was represented by the striking off of one "Dreadnought." He asked his right hon. friend frankly to offer to The Hague Conference to come down to the two-Power standard. Such an offer would satisfy all the nations of the world of our sincerity. He was afraid that not until that offer had been made would the right hon. Gentleman have done all that he could do in the matter. If he made that offer he would at one stroke put the country in the proud position he claimed for it in the speech delivered fifteen months ago and earn the gratitude, not only of every living subject of the Empire, but of generations to come.

Mr. JENKINS (Chatham) said he could not follow the recommendations of the Government in so far as they appertained to the reduction of men in the Navy. To reduce strength by 1,000 men was a serious proposal. The Admiralty should have given in their Memorandum such information as would have enabled the Committee to form an estimate as to whether the British Navy was or was not under-manned. Speaking from the Labour Benches he was glad to have the Prime Minister's assurance that it was the intention of the Government to keep to the two-Power standard. He was in sympathy with the whole of the arguments from Conservative Members in reference to this matter. It was not a political question. He only regretted that so little time was available for the discussion of this Vote. In alluding to the fact that the Admiralty had considered it wise to build vessels of such huge size as the "Dreadnought," he asked why there were only two naval bases where there were dry docks available for such ships. In his opinion every naval base should have a dry dock large enough to take our largest vessels. He appealed to the Secretary to the Admiralty to be careful in reducing the number of men. He urged him to proceed slowly in that direction. He reminded the right hon. Gentleman that they had been told in a few years they would have many ships built. Trade was bad and at present they could build a ship without paying overtime. The 1,000 men who were going to be dismissed must have some place to lay their heads. He believed there should be some reform, but he did not believe in a reform which would bring disaster on a large number of families. This session and last the House had been dealing with the question of the unemployed. The President of the Local Government Board was not yet ready with his Bill. But the problem must be faced, and he held by the dismissals that had taken place in the Royal Dockyards during the last four or five years homes had been devastated by the effort to effect cheapness. That was false economy, especially when they had such excellent testimony from the Secretary to the Admiralty as to the superior character of the work in the building of the "Dreadnought." He believed in the nationalising of undertakings; indeed, the Government dockyards could build as successfully as private firms, and it would be a cheaper policy to give their work to the dockyards than to place it with private contractors. The work would be done quite as efficiently and more economically. He was prepared to say that on six battleships £270,000 could have been saved, if they had been built in the Royal dockyards, compared with the cost of building them in private yards. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way, in times of peace and when he had the means at his disposal, to prepare for any emergency which might arise from any difficulty with foreign nations or from the boom of trade which the President of the Board of Trade said they were to have by-and-bye. As to the grievances from which British naval men suffered, he wished to draw attention to a class who were indispensable. They were told by Lord Tweedmouth that they had not a sufficient number of stokers for the British Navy. What about the stoker? He was a man who worked down in the depths of the ship in a temperature of from 170 to 180 degrees. What were the conditions of his labour? It would astound the Committee to learn that he got the very moderate sum of 1s. 8d. a day on entering His Majesty's Navy. No wonder the Navy was undermanned so far as stokers were concerned. He would hesitate a long while before he would accept a position of that character, when work was to be done in such conditions. While the people of the nation were at ease and sleeping sweetly, men were giving their services at 1s. 8d. a day, pay which was increased to 1s. 9d., then to 2s., then to 2s. 3d., and so forth. A stoker on a tramp steamer got £4 a month with his food provided, and with no such grave restrictions upon him as were imposed in the Navy; nor was he so long away from his home as the naval stoker, who had to work in a huge and complicated machine for £2 10s. a month. He wondered that the Admiralty did not consider the position of the stokers. He felt it incumbent upon him to thank the Secretary to the Admiralty for what he had done in reference to the dockyards, where the principle had been recognised that when the Admiralty were visiting the dockyards, the representives of the men might go to them with their petitions and place their case before them. Was it too much to ask that the right hon. Gentleman would allow the stokers to place their case before the Admiralty? It was evident that the position of the stokers had not been represented to the Board by the highest officers of the Fleets. If it had, he would hold a very poor opinion of the Board of Admiralty which allowed such a condition of things to remain unaltered. He ventured to hope that the right hon. Gentleman would agree that the various grades should be enabled to present their case in a manner similar to that which was allowed in the case of the dockyard men. Another class of men, whose position was a little higher than that of the stokers from the monetary point of view, were the naval writers. That class had received no advances, so far as their conditions of service were concerned, since 1867, and when one read of the way in which they were paid it really stirred one to the core. He found that the third-class writers, entering at the age of eighteen years, well-educated and with great responsibilities, were paid 2s. a day and rated as able seamen. In the second year they received 3s. per day; after five years, 4s. a day; and after twenty-two years service, 5s. 6d. a day, for practically the position of an accountant on board the ship. That, in his opinion, was a disgrace to the Board of Admiralty, seeing that they knew and would not consider the position of these men. He repeated that these were matters which deserved the consideration of the Admiralty. If they had a strong and powerfully built ship, it should contain a peaceful and happy crew, especially when they remembered that the men were deprived of the comforts of home. If they were allowed to place their case before the Admiralty he was certain that there would be an attempt to redress their grievances. Another class of men were carpenters' crews. It would be said that was the class to which he belonged, but he was only going to speak of them from the naval point of view, because the men were helpless themselves. If they were engaged by private firms, they would be able to put their case before their employers. The carpenter's crew consisted of the blacksmith, the cooper, the joiner, and the shipwright. It would surprise the Committee to hear that the cooper, the joiner, and the blacksmith each received 2s. 4d. a day, and they graduated until they had passed the various stages and could take warrant rank, at 5s. 6d. a day. What he asked was that the case of these men, with the whole of the other classes—he referred to the lower deck men—should be considered by the Admiralty Board, and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to use his best influence in their behalf. He knew the Secretary to the Admiralty's sympathy lay somewhat in that direction. He wished further to refer to the fact that martial law in the British Navy did not apply to men of the lower deck. He had received from the Secretary to the Admiralty some assurance that this matter would obtain favourable consideration. But up to the present the same condition of things prevailed. A man who was charged with having been asleep—at any rate that was the story—without having the power to appeal to a court martial, was suddenly disrated and put on the rating of a seaman. Surely in this country, where we had Courts of justice, and where even the criminal could make his appeal, men in the service of their country, with a long record of excellent conduct, ought to have an opportunity of appealing to a court martial, and to have their case thoroughly sifted.

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

GREAT NORTHERN AND CITY RAILWAY BILL [BY ORDER].

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time time."

*MR. MORTON (Sutherland) moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. He opposed it on behalf of the Corporation of the City of London. He said the Bill was promoted by the Great Northern and City Railway Company for the purpose of obtaining a revival of powers for the purchase of land and for extending the time for the completion of the works of the intended extension of the company's line authorised by their Act of 1902, from the present terminus at Finsbury Pavement along and under Moorgate Street to the corner of Lothbury. The time for the purchase of lands under the Act expired on the 8th of August 1905. It was proposed to revive those powers for a period of two years from the passing of the Bill. The time for the completion of the railway and works expired on the 8th of August next, and it was proposed to extend that time for three years. The City Corporation opposed the granting of the original powers mainly on two grounds; first, that the extension in question was unnecessary and that the slight convenience of conveyance for a distance of 420 yards further did not justify the heavy expense involved; and secondly, because the short piece of line proposed would occupy the way beneath part of an important north and south route and seriously interfere with more useful and comprehensive schemes of locomotion. The Corporation were of that opinion still, and therefore opposed any revival or extension of the powers. The company's present terminus was in direct and convenient communication by a short subway beneath Finsbury Pavement with the City and South London

Electric Railway, which ran to the Bank along the same route as the proposed extension, with through fares. The company's existing line was not financially successful, and the fact that the company had failed to take any steps to use the powers granted them five years ago, which they now sought to revive and extend, was proof that the construction of the extension by them was a financial impossibility. The sole object of the Bill was to enable the company to continue to hold statutory powers over the route in question so as to exclude other schemes, and he submitted that Parliament should not assist the company in such a course. If in the future the company found themselves able profitably to undertake the projected extension and the route was still unoccupied, they could then apply to Parliament again for the necessary powers, but until there was reasonable probability of the company's exercising any powers they sought he submitted that no fresh ones should be conferred upon them. He contended that the company had not followed the usual course in applying for a revival of powers, which was to apply in the session immediately following the expiration. The company, however, had allowed eighteen months to elapse before even making up their minds to ask for the revival of the powers which expired in August 1905, and the present application was merely to avoid the inquiry and examination which would ensue upon a fresh application. The landowners and others concerned (including the Corporation) naturally regarded the scheme as dead, and if it was to be sanctioned again it should be after complete inquiry and reconsideration of the whole scheme, and not by way of a mere revival of powers as proposed by the Bill. He opposed the Second Reading on the part of the City Corporation. He had nothing to say against the railway as it now existed. It ran from the northern end of Moorgate Street to Holloway and Finsbury Park, and he regretted that it was not a paying line. Five years back the company got their Act to extend the railway, but from that time till now they had done nothing whatever to carry out the proposed extension. In addition he might inform the House that the Corporation opposed the Bill in 1902, because they thought the extension unnecessary, and therefore, a waste of money, and he thought the proposed station at Lothbury would interfere with the street traffic, and as every Member of the House knew, that was a matter of the first importance in the City of London. Bearing in mind that over 1,250,000 people came into and had to be got out from the City every week-day, the Corporation had been driven to the conclusion (and this agreed with the advice of the police) that the passengers must not be brought to, or dumped down at or near one central spot, but that the stations must be distributed over the City area. He had been told that the company wanted more lift accommodation at their present terminus. That they must otherwise provide for and he would not oppose it. He proposed to ask the House to read the Bill a second time on that day six months, because he wanted to save the ratepayers the expense of opposing it in Committee. He appealed to the House to assist them in the proper regulation of the traffic to and from the City, and he made the same appeal to the Board of Trade; although he was afraid that that Board was generally more inclined to help the companies than the local authorities. He begged to move.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) formally seconded the Motion.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now,' stand part of the Question."

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport) said his hon. friend the Member for Sutherland had stated very clearly and accurately that this Bill sought for a renewal of the powers granted to the Great Northern and City Railway in 1902. Their compulsory powers for the acquisition of land had actually expired, whereas the powers to construct the extension of the line did not expire until August next. The company were now seeking renewed powers for the construction of a short piece of railway and revived powers for the compulsory acquisition and purchase of land. With regard to the acquisition of land he was informed by the railway company that they only proposed to use the compulsory powers for the acquisition of land at Lothbury, where the exigencies of a station might require more space. His hon. friend was an old opponent of the scheme, having given evidence against it on behalf of the Corporation before the Committee in 1902. In that year the hon. Member put his case before the Committee, and so far as he had been able to follow his grounds of objection on the present occasion they were practically the same. The hon. Member said he spoke for the City Corporation in regard to the Bill, but he was rather afraid that he had not the full hearted backing of the City Corporation.

Mr. MORTON said the Parliamentary Secretary was wrongly advised, because the City Corporation had requested him to take the question up, and they were absolutely unanimous in regard to it.

Mr. KEARLEY said that he would, of course, accept the hon. Member's statement. First of all, the hon. Member said this extension was not needed, and that it would be very little use if the House granted it. He had stated that in the judgment of the Corporation the railway terminus would be very much better where it was, because if the extension were allowed it would result in the traffic's being brought into the centre of the City, and the discharging of passengers from the various exits would add to the congestion in that particular neighbourhood. He had prophesied that the railway company would not be able to surmount the difficulty in regard to the necessary ways and means. But the hon. Member failed to convince the Committee of that. The Committee heard him fairly, and his case was supported by witnesses and counsel. The hon. Member had brought forward nothing new on the present occasion to justify the rejection of the Bill. Indeed his case was much stronger in 1902 than now, because he was able to argue that the railway had not constructed its main line—if he might call it so—although it had had powers for ten years. From what the hon. Member said it might be supposed that the railway company was making some most exceptional request in asking for a renewal of powers; but the fact was that, with one exception no one single "Tube" railway had carried out the powers conferred by Parliament without coming back for a renewal of those powers. The Central London Railway, the position of which was above question, which paid a dividend, and which was of the greatest public utility, was authorised in 1891, and came back in 1894, and again in 1899 for an extension of time. The Baker Street and Waterloo Railway was authorised in 1893, and came back to the House in 1896, in 1899, and in 1902. The Charing Cross and Euston Railway was authorised in 1893, and came back to the House in 1898 and 1902. The only exception was the Waterloo and City Railway, which was constructed with London and South-Western money. He thought there was even some special justification for a railway at this moment asking for a renewal of powers, for, as everyone knew, the financial condition of affairs was exceptional. Money was dear and did not flow freely into undertakings of this kind. The amount of railway construction going on, even on the rich lines, was the smallest since 1894, and as to light railways, he was told that of the lines authorised from 1897 onwards less than 10 per cent were under construction. The hon. Member had suggested that the railway was not in a flourishing condition; but it was early days to judge whether the railway was successful or not. Even if the venture was not successful he did not think they had anything to complain of if people liked to embark money in a tube railway in the very heart of London. He did not agree, however, that the venture was hopeless. The railway brought into the city last year 14,000,000 of people, an increase of 1,000,000 over the previous year.

Mr. MORTON: Has it paid any dividend?

Mr. KEARLEY said his hon. friend was aware that there were many good undertakings which were not paying a dividend at present. That was no reason why the railway should not extend its line. He thought he had said enough to justify him in asking the House to give the Bill a Second Reading, and enable it to go to a Committee. If any argument were necessary he would refer to the Royal Commission on London Traffic, which had all the Tube Bills before it, and which stated that when all the railways already authorised had been completed the most practicable part of the railway communication within the central area would be fully provided for. The Commission thus raised no objection to this railway, but recommended that it, with others, should be carried forward to completion. It was the function of the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade to get these Bills a Second Reading. There were occasions when if he dived into the clauses of the Bill he might find objections; but it was for him to get the Bill before the Committee where details were considered and counsel could be heard, and of all the cases he had had to deal with, this was one in which rejection on the Second Reading was least deserved.

Mr. MORTON asked leave to withdraw the Amendment as he had the Board of Trade against him.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

SUPPLY (NAVY ESTIMATES).

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Caldwell in the Chair.]

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That 120,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the said service,"—(*Mr. Murray Macdonald*)—resumed.

Question again proposed.

Mr. JENKINS said there was a grievance among seamen in connection with hospital accommodation on board ship. Every seaman on his note of enlistment was told that hospital accommodation was free. He found, however, that when he had been thirty days in hospital a portion of his wages was deducted. That was wrong in principle. Either hospital accommodation should be really free, or the seaman should be told it was only free for thirty days. He drew the right hon. Gentleman's attention to this griveance last year, but it was still unremedied. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider the suggestion that hospital accommodation should be free. He wished also to point out that the hospital accommodation was not provided in the right place. The sick boy was at present on the main deck right forward where the ship was not protected, whereas it ought to be, as in the American Navy, below the protected deck. He thanked the Admiralty for having greatly increased the wages of the dockyard men, but the men were very anxious to receive a pertinent reply to a pertinent question, namely, whether the Admiralty were prepared to say that trade union rate of wages should prevail in the dockyards. They simply wanted an answer, Yes or No. The representatives of Labour in the House would not be satisfied until the Government were prepared to pay their employees the recognised standard rates of wages which they compelled employers of labour outside who did Government work to pay. He wanted the right hon. Gentleman to give a satisfactory assurance in reference to the improvement of the conditions of British seamen, and in regard to the payment of fair wages; otherwise, however much he would dislike it, he would be compelled to vote against the Government.

Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD asked the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty if he would engage that the programme of new construction would not be proceeded with until the House had had an opportunity of discussing it before the meeting of The Hague Conference.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that of course the Government could not accept his hon. friend's Motion, which was to discharge 8,000 officers and men from the Navy. The real intention of the hon. Gentleman in moving the Amendment was to ask for a promise that no progress would be made with the shipbuilding programme until the House had had an opportunity of discussing on Vote 8. A small unarmoured cruiser was to be laid down at Pembroke, but that was sanctioned last year by Parliament. He could promise that the shipbuilding programme in its essence would not be proceeded with until Vote 8 was taken; but he could not give the assurance which his hon. friend had asked for that Vote 8 should be taken before The Hague Conference, as, of course, the arrangement of the business of the House lay with the Prime Minister. The question of the hon. Member for Chatham, that trade union conditions and wages should be recognised in the dockyards, could not be decided by the Admiralty alone. It must be considered by the Admiralty in consultation with the Treasury, as it affected other Government Departments as well as the dockyards, and perhaps the best course for the hon. Member to take was to address a Question to the representative of the Treasury. He hoped his hon. friend the Member for Falkirk Burghs would withdraw his Amendment, and be satisfied with the explanation he had given.

Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD said he would like the right hon. Gentleman to use his influence with the Prime Minister to have Vote 8 discussed before The Hague Conference. He begged leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

*Mr. HUNT said he wished to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the boys trained in the Nore Squadron were supernumeraries or part of the full complement of the squadron, and also whether he considered the Fleet at the Nore was as ready to meet a sudden attack as if it were a sea-going squadron; and if it was not, was it not true that in about six months time we should have only fourteen battleships really ready instantly prepared to oppose sixteen or eighteen battleships which number would be kept ready for war at any moment by a powerful neighbouring country. He asked whether the Nore squadron was kept in harbour instead of being a sea-going squadron, merely to save the coal bill? Were thirteen battleships to be laid up with only small nucleus crews, and was it not the case that if a battleship was laid up for ten or twelve months her machinery would not work, and that it would take a good deal of time and expenditure of money before the ship could be got ready for war? Was it the case that at the present time six ships of the "Royal Sovereign" class were so laid up, and were therefore at the present time becoming useless for anything like an immediate war? Were these battleships supposed to be in commission merely because their flags were flying from their mast-heads? Supposing the flags were not flying from the mast-heads would it be said that they were in commission? Was it not the fact that most of the dockyards were at the present time short-handed, and that the carpenters and joiners in the Royal Navy were not so well paid as men doing the same kind of work on land? It was alleged that they were only paid a little more than half the wages paid on land, and he thought it was very hard that the men should go through a course of sea training, with all its hardships, and be paid much less than their more fortunate brethren on land. Was it not the fact that only 10½d. was allowed per day per man for the messing of seamen and stokers and mechanics, and for that reason the men were obliged to spend a considerable amount of their wages in buying extra provisions? Was it the fact that the contractors on board His Majesty's warships had a monopoly and charged the men extravagant prices for what they were obliged to buy?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON asked if the hon. Member meant the canteens?

*Mr. HUNT said he did, and he asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not think that that was very wrong, and should be stopped? Did the right hon. Gentleman think that, with the reduced number of battleships and the great shortage in cruisers, the Government would be able to prevent the people from being starved into submission in the event of war with one or more Naval

Powers; and he asked whether, in such an emergency a great part of our Fleet would of necessity not have to be tied to our shores, as we were practically an unarmed nation, surrounded to a certain extent by nations which had millions of armed men.

*MR. MALLET (Plymouth) said that last year the Admiralty had earned the gratitude of the dockyards not only by the generous concessions they had made, but by the willingness which they had shown to meet the representatives of the men. He asked whether the time might not soon come when the Naval men would be allowed to address the Admiralty on their grievances through their own representatives. Hon. Members came and put forward all sorts of little points of detail, which must seem rather trivial when compared with the big issues which they had to discuss, but which yet were of real importance to the comfort and convenience of the men. The men came to their Members of Parliament because they could not go to the Admiralty direct, and if their case was reasonable hon. Members were bound to raise it in the House of Commons, even at the risk of taxing the patience of the House. He could not help thinking that if the Admiralty would only find some plan, compatible with discipline, of allowing the men to state their case themselves, they would be saved a great deal of wearying debate and the case would be much better stated. He thought it would be admitted that there were questions in regard to pensions and wages and other matters of that kind, which ought to be put before the Admiralty by men who knew the subject thoroughly and had a personal right to speak. But it was not only points in regard to money which it was wanted to bring forward, but little points which affected the sense of justice and caused dissatisfaction to the men—points upon which it was important that the Admiralty should know what the feeling of the men was. For instance, there was the question of the re-arrangement of the victualling service, which raised points as to whether the food could not be of better quality, or better cooked, or whether the men could not have more space to eat it in, when it was cooked. In regard to that, he would ask whether it was not possible to re-arrange the system so as to prevent the men from being exploited, as they were now, by private firms. Was it not possible to put the whole victualling system under the supervision of some representative men who had an interest in seeing the work well done? Of course the men wanted all sorts of things—some easier and some more difficult to obtain. They wanted a more workmanlike uniform. They wanted to be called by different names. The Writers wanted to be callled clerks and the Domestics to be called stewards. All these were little points, but still they were worth considering, having regard to the comfort of the men. Then there were such points as this; the men resented being searched twice over when out in Naval ports. They felt that they ought not to be subject to be stopped and searched a second time in the streets by the police or Custom House officers when they had been searched once upon leaving their Establishment or ship Little hardships of that sort might seem very small, but still they rankled in the minds of the men; and he thought they would be avoided if the men could meet the Admiralty and put their case before them face to face. But even in more important matters the same difficulty arose, and it was very difficult for the men to put their case properly before those who had the power to deal with it. He instanced the case of hospital stoppages. A man who contracted an illness at home, even if it was due to fault of his own, was entitled to thirty days free treatment in hospital; but the man who was invalided home from foreign service through illness which arose from climate or exposure did not receive any such indulgence, but had to pay hospital stoppages directly he was received in the hospital at home. That grievance he thought should be removed. There was another small point with regard to certificates of character. A petty officer might have a "very good" character for twenty-one years service, and then in the last or twenty-second year he might commit some small offence—a matter which was not very serious and did not go very deep into character at all—but in consequence of that small offence he might only secure a "good" character and he had to face a serious loss of pension in consequence. It amounted sometimes to 7d. or 8d. a day. That was unfair and ought to be dealt with. It was true that the man should be penalised, but he should be fined something less than such a sum as that. The men felt that the penalty was disproportionate to the offence. Now supposing a man was to raise these questions at the present moment, what could he do? Discipline at present demanded that he should go to his superior officer and leave that officer to state his case for him, but it was not in human nature that an officer should be able to feel the case of a man as the man felt it himself. And, moreover, cases arose in which the officers were concerned. He did not want to blame them, he did not want to say a word against Naval officers, who were not only some of the best public servants but some of the most delightful people one could meet. Ninety-nine out of a hundred might be above criticism, but still it was the hundredth case for whom rules were made. Supposing a petty officer had been summarily and harshly disrated for some trivial offence, what was he to do? The power to disrate summarily was one that the men felt most of all, and they thought that it ought not to be left to a single man to exercise, but should only be left to courts-martial. If a man had such a grievance as that, obviously he could not address himself to his officer to put the case before the Admiralty, inasmuch as the action of the officer himself was concerned. Then the man and others in a similar position started an agitation and appealed to Members of the House to put their grievances before the House of Commons. It did not seem to him that that method of securing attention to grievances which ought to be considered could tend to increase the discipline or efficiency of the Navy. It was sometimes said, when they ventured to urge that the Admiralty should see the representatives of the men, that that course would be subversive of discipline. He did not know what that meant. Here they had a great employer and a great body of employed, very loyal, patient and moderate in their demands. Could it possibly be for the public advantage that these two should hold each other at arm's length, refuse on grounds of dignity to meet, and that the men should be driven to put their case before public agitators like Members of the House of Commons in order to get it presented as they wished? He thought that what he proposed would lead to a better understanding, to the easier working of the great machine. He urged that the men should be given the right, under proper safeguards, to state their own case to the officials, and he thought that in the long run that would not weaken but only strengthen the loyalty and discipline of a very fine body of men.

*Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said he approached this subject with great diffidence, because he was conscious of the presence of experts behind both Front Benches, and he had, he was glad to say, no political interests in the matter like hon. Members who represented dockyard towns. Therefore, he approached the question from the point of view of the ordinary citizen, and he hoped to do so with ordinary common sense. Now that the Amendment had been withdrawn he would give the Government his support to the proposal before the House, but had the hon. Member insisted on pressing his proposal to a division he would have been found in the lobby behind him. It seemed to him that the criticism to which the Government had been exposed came from two sources. First, there had been the expert who had had a good deal to say as to the strength of foreign navies, and who would have the Committee to believe that our Navy was not so strong as it ought to be, having regard to the strength of those foreign navies. He had read a great deal of the proceedings of the House, and he believed that what had been said by experts of to-day had been said by fighting men at all times. They always said "More ships, more guns and more men." They were never satisfied. He dissociated himself from that section of the House entirely, including, he regretted to say, his hon. friend the Member for Chatham, and he agreed with those who were in favour of fewer men being called upon to waste their lives in war. He had listened with interest to the speech of the Secretary to the Admiralty, and he had been led to adopt the conclusions of the right hon. Gentleman—namely, that the Navy was as strong as any other two navies, and, viewed in some aspects, nearly as strong as any other three. There were two views with regard to The Hague Conference. One was that we ought to go to that Conference with pacific utterances and pacific deeds to back them up; and the other, that we should go with an overwhelming force behind us to overawe those whom we met there. He desired to associate himself with the first view. If we went to The Hague Conference in the spirit which animated the speech of the Prime Minister we should do something towards preserving the peace of the world and towards lessening the frightful burden which weighed on the shoulders of the common people. He remembered reading a speech made in 1866 by Mr. Bright in which that gentleman said he stood aghast when he saw that the military and naval expenditure was more than double what it had been twenty years before. It was then—in 1866, if his memory served him rightly—about £20,000,000, to-day it was £66,000,000 or £67,000,000. The time had surely come to call a halt on this expenditure, and for his part he said Godspeed to the Prime Minister or anyone else who could reduce our expenditure and induce other countries to do the same. He believed the Navy was adequate for the needs of the nation, and he quite agreed that the disposition of the ships, whether at home or abroad, was a question for those with close and detailed knowledge only. With regard to the building of ships, we could build more rapidly and from 10 to 30 per cent. more cheaply than any other shipbuilding country in the world, and that was a fact which ought to weigh with the Government and lead them to consider whether we could not go even below the two-Power standard. He now came to a matter which to his mind was of the very greatest importance. It was one thing to have a strong Navy and another to have men and officers efficient to handle the Navy. He had a very grave suspicion as to whether we had an efficient *personnel*. The grounding of our vessels and other accidents that were constantly occurring to our ships and the loss of life that had ensued was due, in his opinion, to the incompetence of the naval officers, due to improper training and selection. He thought, therefore, that some new method of selection and training was necessary, and if the method recently inaugurated had been on right lines, it would have had his support. The new method of training had been in operation for three years, and it was not likely to be a success. He admitted that three years was not sufficient to test a matter of this kind, but he based his contention on the fact that it did not proceed on right lines. Under the old system lads were taken into the Navy at an early age and were taught all things applicable to naval science, including navigation, gunnery, chemistry, international law, and many other studies. Those lads had now added to all their other studies engineering in all its branches, including hydraulics and electricity. Science was constantly increasing its borders, and was being applied more and more to methods of warfare as well as to other matters. But those who were most successful in civil life were those who divided and subdivided and specialised in one particular branch. Under the new system the exact opposite was being done, with the result that it was impossible for these lads to obtain a thorough knowledge of all the subjects with which they had to deal. They did not begin to specialise until they were nineteen, and even then not one in ten took up engineering as a profession; they all had their eye on the bridge. Then came the undemocratic part of the scheme. The cost now as compared with that under the old system of training was double. Where under the old system it cost about £60 per year to train a boy for the Navy it now cost nearly double that amount. It was therefore perfectly obvious that the selection of officers must be made from the small class who could afford to pay that immense sum of money. The First Lord of the Admiralty recognised this difficulty, as was shown by what he had stated in his Memorandum, and he had, if he might venture to say so, suggested an unworthy and almost a discreditable method of getting over it. It had been suggested by the First Lord in the Memorandum that local authorities or private charity should bear part of the charges, and the House was reminded that the fees were reduced for Army and Navy officers' sons, in regard to which he (Mr. Barnes) had only to say that there were no Army or Navy officers among those whom he specially represented. He came to the engineering staff, and here again he found an equally objectionable state of things. It used to be that lads were taken into Keyham Dockyards at fifteen or sixteen years of age, at a cost of £50 or less in many cases. The staff was recruited by exceptionally smart boys from the dockyard, the sons of working class parents, and there was thus a democratic sprinkling in the engineering staff. He found that boys now entered with the cadets at Osborne at the early age of twelve or thirteen years, involving a cost each to their parents of over £100 per year, so that the engineering staff was reserved for those who could provide the money. He protested against such a system, which did not obtain for the staff sufficiently competent men. The arrangements should be of such a character as would secure for the service of the country the best brains, no matter where those brains were to be found. Having regard to what he had said, so far as the officer and the engineer were concerned, it might be thought that with this jack-of-all-trades at the top, some arrangements would be made by which competent men could be obtained for the practical work of the engine-room. But the Admiralty, through their advisers had done exactly the reverse. They had introduced a jack-of-all-trades at the bottom as well as at the top. Let them see what was the system so far as artificers were concerned. A system had obtained for many years whereby the working engineer artificer had been drawn from among the best mechanics in the country. It had proved entirely satisfactory and he saw no reason why the element of trade unionism, mentioned by the hon. and gallant Member for Bury St. Edmunds, should be an objection. He had yet to learn of anything that the artificer class had done against discipline, and the testimony of Lord Selborne, some years ago, was that the artificer class was one of the most efficient in the Navy, and against which no complaint could be made. There was the additional and enormous advantage, which ought to appeal to an economical Government, that these skilled men cost the country nothing to train. They had been trained in workshops throughout the country, and had cost their parents from £100 to £200. After all this initial outlay and sacrifice on the part of their parents, these men had placed themselves unreservedly at the disposal of the Government, and had been recognised as efficient mechanics against whom no complaint could be made, and who had loyally done their part in keeping the engines and machinery of the Navy in a state of efficiency. The case of a ship might be given which had been on commission for three years up to August, 1905, with sixteen artificers on board, and which, owing to sound condition of machinery, had been put in commission again with a new crew in a week thereafter. In consequence, he supposed, of fear of the trade unions, and in consequence of the fear that the legitimate desires of the men would be made known to their superiors, it had been thought desirable to introduce two new classes to supplant the artificers. First of all the boy artificer. The Admiralty had a perfect right to obtain their own men if they could be trained properly, although in regard to this it involved a cost which he thought was being unnecessarily incurred. In addition, they had introduced the class called mechanicians. These men were stokers, aged from twenty-five years up to thirty-two years, and drawn from a class of men who were miserably underpaid, and who ought to be paid double the wages. Owing to the legitimate demand of the stokers for more money, the Admiralty had pressed them into service not as stokers but as mechanicians, for which positions they trained them. It was absolutely impossible to make mechanics of men of from twenty-five to thirty-two years of age; it could not be done; and he warned the Admiralty that if the scheme was persisted in it must inevitably result in wretched and miserable failure. The training of these stokers to become mechanicians so far had cost the country £27,000 per year or thereabout; and if the country was committed to making 3,000 stokers into mechanicians it would cost something like £600 a man, or a total of £1,800,000. The hon. Gentleman seemed surprised, but the expenditure on board the "Indus," which did not appear in the Estimate, showed that the figure he gave was correct. The educational services in the Estimates showed a decrease, but that was altogether illusory. The Estimates under the heading of Educational did not include the cost of instructors of all sorts whose wages were spread from end to end of the volume which had been issued for Members' guidance.

*MR. LAMBERT said these men were available in time of emergency, or time of war.

*MR. BARNES said, with all due deference, that while these men were on the ship they were not available for anything else but what they were doing on the ship. The money spent in training them was absolutely wasted, for they were not likely to get a competent staff of men by it, and they were only going to make trouble in the Navy. The Secretary to the Admiralty, in answer to a question, had said it was not intended to break faith with the present artificers, and that they would not lose their promotion and that increased pay upon the prospect of which they had been induced to join the Navy. It seemed to him that the Admiralty could not help those things taking place, even if they would. Supposing the number of Members of this House was doubled, the probability of their getting a place on the Front Bench would be very much diminished. It was a simple illustration, but in like manner, if they increased the number of artificers and mechanicians, the chance of promotion must necessarily be greatly reduced. Those who were promoted to warrant rank were invariably those who had been engaged in watch-keeping duty. They were going to deprive skilled mechanics, who had cost the country nothing to train, of promotion, and they were going to give that promotion to men who would cost the country this immense sum to train. It was absolutely unfair. It had been made a condition by the Board of Trade that if a man took to watch-keeping duty in the merchant service he should have four years training in the workshop, and a good deal of agitation had been going on in recent years in the direction of stipulating that there should be five years training, because it was thought that even four years was not sufficient to make a man competent to take charge of engines in the merchant service. Yet the Admiralty were going to run the risk of putting these immense boxes of mechanism, which cost a million of money, into the charge of a body of men whom they were going to train themselves in circumstances that absolutely precluded all idea of efficiency or competency. And, moreover, the trained mechanic who joined in a state of efficiency, so far as the use of tools and general knowledge of machinery was concerned, was to be made subordinate to the new man, who, because of his position as watch-keeper, would have best chance of promotion. The result was that even already they were not getting the mechanics that they had hitherto obtained. Last year the Admiralty applied for thirty-two men and they got five. They would not get more mechanics in this country, and, if the scheme went on, there would be one inevitable result—he would do what he could to make it so—that the mechanics simply would not go near the Navy, and the Government would have to do what they could without them. He had not a word to say against the stoker, who ought to be promoted, and he hoped the Admiralty would find some means by which he could obtain warrant rank. In conjunction with three other Members, he visited the dockyards last year, and he found there were many places of trust and responsibility to which stokers could be promoted—places requiring general intelligence and adaptability, but not the technical knowledge and skill which the mechanic had, and which he obtained only as the result of training in the formative period of his life. Therefore he trusted that the stoker would not be forgotten, but that he would have increased pay and promotion in recognition of his services to the State. The President of the Board of Trade had, the previous evening, been very severe on railway directors for not paying wages at a rate sufficiently high to attract men to the railway service, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would deal as faithfully with the directors of the Navy in regard to the stokers. He hoped the Admiralty would reconsider this scheme of training in all its bearings, and that they would take steps to have it inquired into thoroughly by those who had practical and detailed knowledge. He felt sure, if they did, that it would be found that the scheme was not likely to succeed, and that they would retrieve the position before more harm was done. Reverting to the general question upon which he began his speech, he trusted that the Government would be proof against the blandishments of the jingoes inside and outside the House, and of scaremongers and pot-house warriors, and would see that less money and not more was spent on the Navy as well as on the Army.

*Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth) said he was sure that he expressed the general regret which was felt that they were going to lose the services of Sir Evan MacGregor, the Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty, who had at all times rendered such excellent service. To anybody connected with the naval ports, and who took an interest in naval matters, he was courtesy itself, and he was always able and willing to afford the utmost service to all persons who had to make inquiries. With regard to the two-Power standard, he thought it would be admitted that the matter had been threshed out completely. Whether they regarded it from the point of view of the two best Continental nations, or two best navies in the world, we had that two-Power standard at the present time, and therefore he could not help thinking that for many years to come it would be unnecessary to discuss any question of the two-Power standard. We had a splendid Navy, and he hoped they would see in his town of Portsmouth on May 3rd next a good many Members of the House who were desirous of witnessing the review which would then be held at Spithead. If that review had been held previous to that debate there would have been less discussion with regard to the two-Power standard. We had a magnificent Fleet, and also magnificent officers and men. No one could say that they were not loyal and devoted, and the only question was to see that we did our duty to them and gave them justice. Reference had been made to the grievances of the men. He wanted, as representing one of the principal naval ports in the country, to say a few words on that subject. He cordially agreed with his hon. friend who had referred to the difficulties which the men experienced in getting their views expressed to the Admiralty. According to the rules of the service, if the men had a grievance, some one of their number must go and represent it to their superior officer and take the chance of its ever getting to the proper quarter. Let them imagine a man going to his superior officer and suggesting that the subject of disrating should be taken into consideration. He would like to see the man bold enough to do it. Combination was not allowed in the service; one man could go to his superior officer, but not two. But combination took place—it took place under the rose. The men held hole-and-corner meetings in different parts of the country, and they issued circulars which were distributed by men who had no connection with the Navy. They were unsigned and perfectly anonymous, and he supposed there was hardly a rating which did not issue a circular. They were distributed broadcast, in the hope that some of them would fall into the hands of someone who would take up the case of the men. He cordially agreed with the suggestion that it would be far better and more satisfactory if the men could go themselves either to the Admiral of their port or to the Admiral of their station, or could approach the Admiralty themselves with reference to these questions. If anything had given satisfaction to the dockyard towns it was the fact that the Lords of the Admiralty had received representatives of the different trades in the dockyards; and if that could be done why could not a similar thing be done in regard to the men of the Navy? There were many subjects with which landsmen were not able effectually to deal. The present Board of Admiralty, and indeed previous Boards, had done their best to remedy the grievances of the men, and therefore he was not complaining of what the Admiralty had done, but merely asserting that they did not know enough about the grievances, and that it would be better for the men to present them themselves. The men suffered a lot of grievances at the present time. Reference had been made to the terrible question of disrating. That was a grievous subject in the Navy, the commanding officer of a ship having practically absolute power to reduce the rating of a petty officer to that of an able-seaman. There were no fewer than 951 cases of disrating in 1905. If they were to take a *plébiscite* of the men in the service, they would have an almost unanimous vote that that subject ought to be dealt with by the Admiralty. He had nothing to say against the officers. They were splendid fellows and we were proud of them, but one out of ten suffered from liver, or his temper was not particularly good, and now and then his men had to suffer. The man disrated suffered a great and grievous wrong, and considering the great number of cases which occurred he hoped the Admiralty would consider whether something could not be done to alter the state of things. Another grievance was in connection with what was called "double petty time," or the halfpenny a day extra received on pension by petty officers for every year of very good service. He wished to put forward a bad case which occurred in his own town, in which he thought there was a serious grievance. There was a man named McKay who was a first-class petty officer on board the "Victory." He was at mess with his friends, all petty officers, and did not at the time know he was the senior petty officer. Some of his friends broke the regulations by beginning to smoke. The senior petty officer ought to have reported the matter, but McKay did not like to peach on his friends and he remained there. By-and-bye an officer came along and discovered what was going on; and as the result McKay was reduced from the character of "very good" to "good." That meant loss of "double petty time," representing 6½d. per day for life, or just about £10 a year, as McKay was serving the last year of his time. He (Mr. Bramsdon) had appealed to the Admiralty on two occasions, and asked them to be generous to this man, whose offence was not a serious one, and he still hoped that McKay would receive some consideration at their hands. McKay was a sailor and a man, and he recognised that he was responsible for a breach of the regulations, but surely to deprive him of 6½d. per day for life was too severe. What he had suggested was that McKay should lose one year's pay. Another complaint was that when sailors were alleged to have committed offences (perhaps very slight ones) they were put in the "report" and remained, it might be, four or five days as prisoners at large on board ship, and were not allowed to go home. It was suggested in the lower deck programme that the men should not be kept prisoners till they were found guilty of the offence, if that offence was not a serious one. If the man turned out to be innocent it was a great hardship that he should have been kept a prisoner. Another grievance was that warrant and commissioned rank was not open to all ratings. Again, the warrant officer had to serve twenty or twenty-two years before he could hope to be promoted to commissioned rank. It was suggested that they should be entitled to promotion after fifteen years, which was surely long enough, and might seem to the men almost a lifetime in itself. Another matter the warrant officers grumbled at was that their children did not get the compassionate allowance, as in the case of other officers. He did not think it too much to ask that the warrant officers should have the same privileges as other officers. The pay of warrant officers on promotion from petty officers also was small compared with what it should be. They were put to the expense of new uniforms and naval requirements of all kinds, and the smallness of the pay was an old-standing grievance. Another point was in reference to re-engagement money. Certain men were entitled, when they re-engaged beyond a stated period, to have an extra 2d. a day, but that was only granted to the seamen branch of the service. It was an old grievance among the stokers, and why the extra pay should not be extended to all ratings passed his comprehension. Then it was an anomaly of the Service—which, indeed, was full of anomalies—that good conduct badges, carrying with them 1d. a day, were not granted to schoolmasters and domestics, while, though good conduct badges were granted to chief and other writers, chief and other engineer ratings, and chief and other electricians, nothing was paid in respect of them. He wished in conclusion to say a word on the subject of the men's pay. It could hardly be believed that the pay of the able seaman was the same as fifty years ago. Surely it was not too much to ask that after fifty years the able seaman might have an increase of pay? The pay of an able seaman was 1s. 7d., and of an ordinary seaman 1s. 3d. They got rations, but those had to be supplemented, and they must maintain their kit. What was asked was that they should have better and continuous pay. He thought that if they could only carry out the suggestion which had been more than once made, and the men be enabled to present their own case, we should get not only the loyal and devoted body of men we now had, but, what was much more important, a contented Navy.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE said he sympathised with the hon. Member when he said that there was no class in the Navy which had not its grievance. In so saying the hon. Member must have touched a responsive chord in the heart of every Member for a dockyard constituency. He felt confident that the hon. Member's appeal would not fall on deaf ears. He wished to press for an Answer to the Questions which had been addressed to the representatives of the Admiralty, earlier in the day, by the Leader of the Opposition, and to which at the time the Secretary to the Admiralty was not in a position to reply. He hoped that in the interval the right hon. Gentleman had possibly been able to acquire the information required. There was also a question which he himself had put on Tuesday last which was of some interest, and which required to be explained to the satisfaction of the Committee—he meant as to the proposed drafting of the newest and latest ships as they were completed into the Home Fleet. He gathered that the Home Fleet was admittedly to be a reserve fleet, and if that were so why should the newest and best ships be sent to that fleet instead of to the Channel Fleet, which was to be the chief fighting force? He did not think that the answer given by the Secretary to the Admiralty that afternoon as to the reason for not building cruisers was a fair one. The right hon. Gentleman tried to throw the responsibility upon the late Government; but he would remind him that the shipbuilding scheme of the late Government had not been looked upon as being inviolate by the present representatives of the Admiralty, who had altered it to their own sweet will. This year a light unarmoured cruiser was being laid down at Pembroke, which he understood had something to do with destroyer flotillas. If it was merely a fast unarmoured ship that was required, would it not be possible to convert to that purpose one of the numerous lightly armoured cruisers which were no longer thought fit to join the fighting fleets? An important point had been raised by his right hon. friend about dockyard accommodation. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty, who knew better than anybody else how many docks were available, stated that there was one dock capable of taking in the "Dreadnought" at Portsmouth, but he did not say that that dock was only available for six hours out of the twenty-four—three hours each side of high tide, and then only through an emergency entrance, which it was exceedingly difficult to turn a large ship into. That very greatly reduced the possibility of using Portsmouth for a repairing base in the case of ships being injured in action, say, in the North Sea. It emphasised the importance of providing suitable dock accommodation for those great ships on the East Coast. That principle was amply recognised by the Government in the provision which appeared in the Estimates last year for a new lock entrance at Portsmouth; but was that being vigorously proceeded with now? The general question of dock facilities was so serious that some information ought to be given to the Committee. The chief remedy, of course, lay at Rosyth. There was £20,000 out of £940,000 in the Estimates for the lock at Portsmouth, £10,000 of which was voted last year, but apparently hardly anything had been done during the current year. There was only £10,000 put down for Rosyth out of a probable £2,500,000. The Civil Lord had said that they did not want to proceed in a hurry but with caution. Rosyth, however, has been under the most minute consideration of the Admiralty since 1903. There had been elaborate plans and surveys made again and again, yet, so far from the work being pressed on, they were informed a few months ago that the superintendent civil engineer was being withdrawn from Rosyth because there was not sufficient work for him to do. He could not, therefore, believe that the Government were proceeding with this work in earnest; but however earnest they might be in their intention they had certainly not made the necessary provision for the work in the Estimates. He hoped the Government would give some definite assurance in regard to the matter. The hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow had made an interesting speech, and they always listened to him with respect. He had referred to a matter which he thought was of importance, and that was in regard to the education of young officers, when he emphasised the point which he himself had made the other day that it really was a discreditable suggestion in the First Lord's statement that the cost of the education of those cadets should be practically thrown upon public authorities and other bodies; in other words upon the rates. No answer had, however, been given. If it was thought that there should be a wider area from which these cadets should be drawn, the only way that was to be accomplished was to reduce the fees. He condemned, however, this cadging for private support, or for support from public authorities or the Argyll fund. Where he differed from the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division was when he inveighed against the two-Power standard. He did not want, however, to go into that question again, but when the hon. Member said that in his view and in the view of his class the two-Power standard was too high, and put an intolerable pressure upon the common people, and when he quoted Mr. Bright to enforce his view, he hoped the hon. Member would not forget the advice of that great colleague of Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, who said he would vote £100,000,000 before he allowed another Navy to reach the standard of ours. The two-Power standard was essential to the safety of this country and any disaster resulting from the falling away from that standard would fall with ten thousand-fold more effect upon the class which the hon. Member represented than upon any other class. [AN HON. MEMBER: Tell us how.] Because they would be starved. The very first effect of a Naval disaster would be that the price of foodstuffs would go up far beyond the reach of the poorer classes. Tariff Reformers had been accused of wishing to bring back the "Hungry Forties." That was, of course, an absurd charge, but if anything would bring back the conditions of the "Hungry Forties" it would be a disaster to the Navy, resulting from a weakening of our proper standard of strength.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester) said he had desired to call attention to the rate of wages in the dockyards at Rochester and Chatham. As he had received a promise that the First Lord of the Admiralty would receive a deputation on the subject he would not proceed with his Motion for a reduction of the Vote.

*MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said he had listened with the greatest interest and attention to every speech which had been made on the proposals of the Government in regard to the Navy. The criticism had been neither factious nor of a Party character, and the whole question had been viewed from a broadly national point of view. He intended to adhere to that position. He did not think that any serious complaint could be made of the policy which His Majesty's Government had pursued towards the Navy in these Estimates, but he thought they were entitled to understand what was the policy and theory of the Government in regard to the two-Power standard. Everybody in the House was agreed that the two-Power standard should be maintained. [" No."] Well, nearly everybody. The only question was what was the two-Power standard. They were told that for that they must trust the Admiralty, but he entirely declined to accept that view. He agreed that the Admiralty ought to be trusted on matters of detail, but on the general principle of what was the normal strength which ought to be maintained it was a matter supremely and expressly for the House. He thought, in view of the utterances of the Prime Minister, that they were entitled to an explanation of what that standard meant to the Government. He had always thought that the two-Power standard meant that we in this country should always maintain a naval strength which would give us an effective margin over the two next strongest naval powers, and he was amazed and very seriously disturbed, and he believed the country would be seriously disturbed, by the entirely novel standard which had been suggested in these debates and by the Prime Minister. It was now suggested that it was sufficient for this country to maintain a naval strength giving her an effective margin, not over that of any two other Powers, but only over that of such two Powers as the Government considered at the moment to be possible allies against this country. That was a novelty of a very serious character which would have a serious effect upon the confidence of the country in the Naval policy. He hoped the Government would tell the Committee fairly and frankly whether they intended to maintain the old two-Power standard or the one which had been adumbrated, but which he was thankful to see from their programme had not been acted upon by the Government. Their programme of shipbuilding was admittedly a satisfactory one. So far as he could see the old margin of superiority was to be maintained for the next three years. He did not share the alarmist views of some hon. Gentlemen. He believed our natural and national resources in the matter of shipbuilding were so enormously superior to those of any other country that the proposals of the Admiralty in this respect must be regarded as entirely satisfactory. It only became possible to reduce the shipbuilding programme of this country when that of other countries was reduced, and he was aware, and he believed every Member of the House was aware, that if any other country increased their programme we could with the greatest ease increase ours. That was clear if one considered for a moment what happened in the case of the "Dreadnought." In eighteen months and eighteen days from the date of her being ordered her pennant was hoisted and she was ready for action. Let hon. Members contrast the building of that ship with that of the "Deutchland." That vessel was ordered in May, 1903, and she was not ready for sea till August, 1906. The "Dreadnought" was built in eighteen months, the "Deutchland" in thirty-nine months. That showed that when another country laid down a ship we could wait eighteen months and save the interest on £1,000,000; that we could then lay down our answering ship, launch her if necessary in eighteen months, and have her ready for sea three months before that which took thirty-nine months to build—and our ship would have eighteen months more improvements inside her. We could also build at an infinitely cheaper rate. Where it cost France £124, Germany £93, and Russia £97 per ton, we in this country could build in one third of the time at a cost of £88 per ton. He entirely repudiated the theory of the two-Power standard as advanced by the Government, and he was glad to see we still had a good working margin on the old basis, which was to be maintained until the end of 1910. If at that time there was any need to increase our Naval strength, it would be an easy and comparatively cheap matter to do so. He had noticed that the debates on the Navy almost always turned on the question of material, but to his mind the question of the *personnel* was infinitely more important. He believed it was more true of the Navy than of the Army to say that the bottom of the whole thing was the *personnel.* It was not a question of ships and guns, but of men. It was on that point he desired to say a few words. He had very grave doubts as to the wisdom of the policy pursued by the Admiralty in the training of officers and men. He had made a careful study of the proposals that had been made, and had tried to understand the true meaning and bearing of them, and, so far as he had been able to understand them, the whole trend of the training was to decrease the actual responsibility placed on the young officer. He observed an increased amount of time devoted to sitting on a form, and a great decrease of the time spent on the quarter-deck and in the boats, learning how to control and lead men, which were the qualities on which the success of the service depended. There were on every man-o'-war three distinct classes, the executive, the engineer, and the Marine. What was not altogether appreciated was the real character of the different functions of each of these classes. Each of them was highly trained and specialised, possessing functions entirely different. The speciality of the executive officer was that he had to lead the men and get their confidence. The engineer officer, under the old *régime*, had nothing to do with the control and discipline of the men; his only business was to drive and manage the engine. If any man in the engine room did anything wrong he was brought up to the executive officer to be dealt with. The Marine was simply a soldier who was carried about in ships, because it was necessary that a Fleet should be able to land a highly efficient force of infantry at a moment's notice. Those three classes were separately trained and recruited, and were drawn from different classes of the community, and they were brought together on a man-o'-war. In future the theory was that all the officers—executive, engineer, and Marine—were to remain together for a certain number of years, of common unspecialised training, then branch off into the three old classes again till they became commanders, after which they were to come together again and be all equally eligible for the highest rank in the Navy. That had great advantages; it would get rid of any jealously there might otherwise be, and it very much widened the field of choice for the appointment of Admirals. A good deal of ignorant criticism had been directed against the plan. But the whole thing at bottom depended on the spirit and character of the officers and men, and he had very grave doubts as to the wisdom of the policy the Admiralty was pursuing as to that. The leader of men was still wanted on board ship. The question was whether, under this new system of common entry and common training, the executive officer at the moment he was wanted would be a better officer and would engender greater confidence in his men than under the old system. He hoped that the Secretary to the Admiralty would be able to assure the Committee that the mind of the Admiralty was not irrevocably closed to the consideration of a return to something like the old system if this tremendous experiment should justify the doubts he had expressed. Some explanation was required of the very considerable changes made in the strategic disposition of the various naval bases. He could not understand upon what sort of strategic principle Chatham, one of the most valuable of our naval ports, was as such to be abandoned. It was capable of being made, in fact was already a first-class naval station, and occupied a finer position for action over the north of Europe than Roysth or any naval base on the East Coast. He understood that both sides of the

American continent had been almost entirely abandoned so far as naval bases were concerned. He dared say that enormous change was justified, but he thought they were entitled to know on what grounds it was being made. The Atlantic Fleet, he understood, was based on Gibraltar. It could not be denied that Gibraltar could be made absolutely red hot by any Power which was able to occupy the *campo* and the country immediately around, and he could not help thinking that to base a fleet on a place like that was a doubtful and extremely hazardous experiment. With regard to submarines, they consisted of two kinds, the submarine and the submersible. The submarine dived by plunging, and that was the type which this country had adopted. The submersible type, which had been adopted by nearly every other Power, instead of plunging, went down upon an even keel, and was a much more practical sort of boat, was more easily controlled, and was far better for the firing of torpedoes. As a matter of fact, it had been found by universal experience to be far safer than the plunging type which this country had adopted. He knew that that was a very delicate subject, but if it was possible, consistent with the public service, to explain why the Admiralty had adopted the submarine type, he hoped such an explanation would be given. On the whole, while, as he had said, he profoundly dissented from the Prime Minister's new doctrine of the two-Power standard, he thought that the proposals of the Government might be supported by those who like himself desired to see our Navy paramount.

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said he wished to put to the Secretary to the Admiralty a practical question on a point of immediate interest. It referred to the proposed abolition of the coastguards. Many hon. Members were particularly interested in the question. In the Isle of Wight there were a great many coastguard stations, and they were now threatened with extinction. He thought the Secretary to the Admiralty would recognise how urgent the question was from the point of view of saving life at sea, seeing that coastguards were in a great many cases actually responsible for the manning of lifeboats and the rocket apparatus under the control of the Board of Trade. Already some of these coastguard stations had been abolished, and he was sure the policy would be viewed with the greatest concern by all those who were anxious that this nation should not fall behind other nations in the matter of saving life at sea. He contended that the coastguards were quite essential to our life-saving arrangements, and we could not do without them unless something else was put in their place. It might be said that the difficulty could be overcome by wireless telegraphy, but that was not so. Those who had read the accounts of what took place recently at the Hook of Holland where the "Berlin" was wrecked, would recognise that although these scientific mechanical contrivances were of great value in ordinary times, when it came to a question of getting men and women from a wreck it was generally one brave man who did the job. The men were used to the sea and had the nerve for the work, but it was now proposed to substitute a smaller force under the Board of Trade. He protested against any such proposal without the gravest consideration, and he would urge the Secretary to the Admiralty not himself to countenance it unless what was put in the place of the coastguard was equally efficient and equally acquainted with the sea. An inter-departmental Committee was considering the subject, and he would ask for an assurance that nothing would be done until that Committee had made its Report and hon. Members had been able to consider it. He understood that the Committee had not yet finished its labours. If that was so, he thought it would be reasonable that his right hon. friend should give an assurance that nothing would be done in this most important matter until not only the inter-departmental Committee had reported, but until hon. Members on both sides of the House had had an opportunity of considering the Report.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON was understood to assent.

*Mr. WILKIE (Dundee) said he desired to say a few words as a representative of many of the men who were concerned in the matter before the House. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the lucid businesslike speech he made in introducing the subject. While he was no alarmist, he must candidly confess that he was in favour of a sufficient, efficient, and proficient Navy. What he meant by that was that the ships commissioned should be efficiently armed, and above all proficiently manned. In the manning of the fleets by proficient men of all grades lay their real fighting power. In the present state of science and in view of the great advancements which were being made surely it was not too chimerical to suppose that it was possible before many years were over to see what might be called the United States of Europe so far as peace was concerned. He wished to support the hon. Member for Portsmouth in the statement he had made, and to urge the representatives of the Admiralty to consider the case of the men of the lower deck. If these men were permitted to organise for the purpose of explaining their grievances it would be much better. And the men afloat should be able to approach the powers that be with the view of having their grievances dealt with in a different manner from that followed at present. It had been said that they were now getting clever lads for the Navy. During his own chequered career in life he had always fought shy of clever people. He had found that they very often went up like a rocket and came down like a stick. He thought it would be for the benefit of the Department if the men were able to approach the Admiralty through representatives. If they were able to do so, there would be less likelihood of outbreaks such as that which occurred at Portsmouth, and the grievances would be dealt with in a reasonable manner, and in a business method. Skilled mechanics of various trades aboard ship were only receiving a pittance of 2s. 9d. per day. How could the Admiralty expect efficient men if that was the recompense they received? The men could not get above the rank of warrant officers, some of whom only got 5s. 6d. per day, whereas chargemen with similar duties ashore would receive somewhere about double that sum. They had had no advance on their rate of pay for the last thirty years. The grievances of these men should be considered by the Admiralty.

Sir JOHN BENN (Devonport) said that in the admirable statement issued by the First Lord of the Admiralty he found the following paragraph—

> "The question of rating advancement and the conditions of service of seamen and petty officers has been carefully reviewed during the year, and certain proposals, having for their principal object the improvement of the position and responsibility of the petty officer, are now under consideration with a view to their adoption in the course of the coming financial year."

He had a mass of evidence bearing on that paragraph, but he would save the Committee from listening to it if he could get a promise from the Secretary to the Admiralty that a conference between the First Lord and other officials at the Admiralty and the Members who represented dockyard constituencies, similar to that which was held two or three years ago, could be arranged to discuss dockyard grievances.

*Mr. LAMBERT said that he could assure the hon. Member for Devonport that the First Lord was very anxious personally to probe to the bottom any grievances that existed, and would be delighted to receive a deputation of Members representing dockyard constituencies. They could then thresh out much better than in the House of Commons all the minute and intricate questions involved. That assurance equally applied to the remarks of the hon. Member for Portsmouth and the hon. Member for Plymouth, whom he must congratulate on having made so excellent a speech. At the late hour of a quarter past eleven they would excuse him from going into all the questions that had been raised in the debate. With regard to submarines, the views expressed by the hon. Member opposite should be placed before the proper experts. He need not go into the question of the training of officers which had been raised by an hon. Member opposite, but would refer him to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds. The hon. Member for Fareham had asked questions about the dock at Portsmouth. The Admiralty were fully alive to the importance of that matter; but it would be extremely difficult to make a new lock of sufficient depth and length at Portsmouth. The opinion of eminent outside engineers was being taken as to the best means by which the object could be achieved of giving better access to great ships into the dock at Portsmouth. As to the question raised by the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow, the scheme for mechanicians and stokers, introduced a year or two ago, was still in process of development. The Admiralty believed that ultimately it would be successful, but at present they could not accede to the wish of the hon. Member and pull the whole system up by the roots to see whether it was growing or not; but he could assure the hon. Member that the Admiralty had an open mind on the subject and that they would watch the system carefully, and if improvements could be introduced the Department would carry them out. All they desired was the efficiency of the Navy; and he made an appeal to the Committee to grant Vote A and Vote 1, assuring hon. Members that for all the money they entrusted to the Board of Admiralty they would have full value.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) said he was not a naval expert, but he believed in the manning of the Navy with efficient men. They had been promised over and over again that all the matters raised by the Labour Members should have careful consideration, but he had not heard a single word in regard to the lower deck sailors and the stokers whose rate of pay was only £2 15s. per month compared with £4 10s. per month paid to the same class of men in the merchant service together with their rations. The men in the Royal Navy had to buy out of their wages a considerable portion of their rations. It was generally supposed by the people of this country that the Government provided the naval men with their provisions; but he could assure hon. Members that it cost an ordinary stoker £1 per month out of his wages for the purchase of additional stores which were necessary to keep him in health and equal to his work. That was a question which ought to be taken into serious consideration. Unless the men in the Royal Navy spent that money on extra rations they would often go hungry.

*MR. BOWLES said that he had lived on the official ration.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said that that was the reason why the hon. Gentleman was so thin. He knew what Navy rations were, and what rations were in the mercantile service. He also knew that the shipowners in the latter service were very keen on obtaining the Navy scale for merchant seamen, because it would save them about 2d. per man a day. He was told that the sum which it cost the Government to feed a stoker or fireman on His Majesty's ships was 10d. for twenty-four hours. In his opinion it was cruel to expect any man to work for twenty-four hours on 10d. for food. What it meant was that the men had to provide food out of their own wages. Another question to which he wished to call attention was the system of canteens on board warships. He was told that private contractors paid £300 for getting the contract to supply a ship's stores, and that they got it on the understanding that they charged whatever price they liked. A man, whom he had every reason to believe, told him that he had paid 2s. 6d. for a tin of sardines which cost the contractors about 5d. He had brought this whole food question before the House on many previous occasions, and as far back as ten years ago, when he was promised that the matter should have very careful consideration.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said the matter was being considered now.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON said he was going to take nothing for granted. He wanted to know who was considering it. What Committee was considering it? They had had Committees upon this subject for years, and they had arrived at the conclusion that the Navy rations were excellent. What was the reason why at the end of ten years many of our best seamen left the Navy? He would like to know whether the naval experts had considered that question. It was all very well to talk about a one, two, three, or four-Power standard, but it cost the country £400 or £500 to train a seaman. At the end of ten years service that man was at his best. He knew his trade as a gunner and everything in connection with the service. But the men were disgusted with their miserable pay, out of which they had to buy extra food and pay charges for uniform. There was thus very little left for the sailor at the end of the year. That was why so many men left the Navy. If there was a committee of inquiry into these matters, which was what he wanted, he hoped that it would not be formed of naval experts. He had nothing to say against them. They were good men who had been brought up in the Navy and looked back to the time of Nelson. Nelson was a great man, but we wanted to get up to date. As a lower deck man, he held that the time had come when it ought to be possible for a man to start at the lowest rung of the ladder and rise to the top. In that way they would get better and abler men for the Navy. As things were, the best places were reserved for the sons of the well-to-do. He refused to believe that simply because they were some of the well-to-do they had more brains than anybody else. Then as to the shipwrights, they were a most important body of men on warships. A Committee recommended that they should be dispensed with, but when a ship had gone ashore and got into a difficult position the shipwrights had proved themselves of great use in salving vessels. On one occasion he knew that they saved nearly £1,000,000 of money in salving a ship by constructing coffer dams and bringing that vessel into port. They only received however 5s. 6d. a day at the highest. That was not a high wage for skilled men in such a responsible position. The lower grades of shipwrights were paid 1s. 8d., 2s., and 2s. 4d. a day. The same class of men working in the private shipyards received 7s. a day. That was a matter into which some inquiry ought to be made. He did not think the Government ought to waste the taxpayers' money, but they ought to be model employers and pay something like the current rate of wages, taking, of course, into consideration the fact that the naval man received a pension at the end of his service. There was a good deal of dissatisfaction among the men in the lower grades of the service, and he therefore suggested that a Committee, not of naval experts but of business men, should be appointed to inquire into the matter. He would revert for a moment to the question of the canteen. The money spent by the men on a big ship in the canteen was about £700 a month, and the Government let these canteens out to a contractor who sweated the men. Had we not now arrived at the time when "Liverpool pantiles"—the biscuits served out to the men—could be done away with? Ships could now carry proper stoves and stores and cook their bread on board, and not only would the barrels of flour take up less room than the barrels of biscuits, but the bread could be made on board ship at a cheaper price than biscuits could be supplied at and there would thus be a saving to the nation.

*THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that the hon. Member was going into great detail on Vote 2. The general discussion was being taken on Votes A and 1, and points of detail on other Votes were usually left till those Votes were taken.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON expressed his regret at having contravened the rules of order, but said a great deal of latitude had been given and he thought that he would be allowed to bring these points before the Committee. They were of very great importance. However, whether he had been out of order or not he had had his say, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give the matters his consideration.

*MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that the hon. Gentleman might rest assured that all the points he had raised would be well considered. He hoped hon. Members would now agree to the Votes.

Original Question, "That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, including 11,595 Royal Marines," put, and agreed to.

2. £6,869,700, wages, etc., of Officers, Seamen, Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 8*th March*, 1907.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

The Chairman of Ways and Means reported, That, after conferring with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining in which House of Parliament the respective Bills under the Private Legislative Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, should be first considered, they had determined that the following Bill should originate in the House of Lords, viz.:—Aberdeen Corporation.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Rawtenstall Corporation Bill. Read a second time.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour; From Allhallows; B. Winning; Cockermouth; Codnor; Delph; Dowlais (two); Ellenborough; Ellistown; Great Clifton; Horsley Woodhouse; Ireland; Leven; Loscoe; Moor House Guards; Morley Main; Netherton; Oughterside; Outfield; Pentrich; Pontefract; St Helen's; Seaton Moor Pit; Snibston; Soothill; and Wythemoor Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petition from Penryn, against; to lie upon the Table.

MUNICIPAL LOANS (PURCHASE OF LAND).

Petition from Workington, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour; From Eastbourne; Ilford; Kingston; Ladybank; North Hackney; Paddington; Rastrick; Reigate; Truro; Wednesbury; and Westminster; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Report on the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Colleges of Science and of Art, the Geological Survey and Museum, and on the work of the Solar Physics Committee for the year 1905 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND.)

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 7th March; *Mr. Runciman*]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Cavan Land Appeal Cases.

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the decisions will be given in the land appeal cases, heard at Cavan in November, 1906; how many cases were heard at the sitting referred to; how many of these had the assessors to inspect; and how many assessors were employed on these cases.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission hope that the decisions in the cases referred to will be given during the present month. The number of cases heard was 113, in all of which it was necessary for the assessors to inspect the holdings. Two assessors were employed on these cases, but, as they had certain work in hand from previous sittings, it was not possible for them to commence inspection of the Cavan cases at once, and the inspection was further delayed by bad weather.

Fair Rent Agreements.

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how many fair rent agreements were filed in the Land Commission for the three years ending 31st July, 1903; and how many fair rent agreements were filed in the

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Land Commission for the three years ending 31st July, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that, for the period first mentioned, the number of fair rent agreements lodged with them was 18,799, and for the second period the number was 18,701.

Refusal of Commissioners to Sanction Land Sales.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state in how many cases the Estates Commissioners have refused to sanction the sale of estates under the Irish Land Act of 1903; and how many cases of refusal of sale were on the ground that the lands before them were not an estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have refused to sanction the sale of estates in fifty-four cases. In each of these cases the Commissioners' refusal took the form of declining to declare the lands to be an estate for the purposes of the Land Act, 1903.

Delay in Erection of School at Emly, Tipperary.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that negotiations for the erection of a national school at Emly, county Tipperary, have been carried on for over four years; and that on the 10th January, 1905, the Commissioners of National Education ordered the erection of a schoolhouse for 350 children; and if he can give an assurance that the necessary loan will be forthcoming at an early date so that this work may be proceeded with without further delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I regret the delay of which the hon. Member complains, but the case has not been proceeded with pending a settlement of the general question of building grants to national schools which is still under consideration.

Poor Law Administration.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the exact number of statutes forming the Law of Poor Law administration, and the number of Local Government Board Orders now in force, and not withdrawn to date; the number of amending Laws since the Act of 1834 to date; and will he consider the advisability of the consolidation of these statutes.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) It is difficult to give precise figures as regards these matters; but I may state that the Index to the Statutes enumerates under the head of "Poor" 158 Acts of Parliament (extending only to England and Wales) as being in force at the end of the session of 1905, and relating wholly or partly to the subject. Of these 118 have been passed since 1834. Many of the Statutes enumerated, however (as *e.g.* The Agricultural Rates Act, 1896), only relate indirectly to Poor Law administration. The number of Poor Law General Orders in force which apply to the whole or greater part of England and Wales may be taken as approximately sixty-five. I realise the advantage which would be likely to result from the consolidation of the Poor Law Statutes, but the work is one which would hardly be undertaken pending the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.

Holding of Martin Maher of Ballingarry, County Tipperary.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether it is the intention of the Estates Commissioners on acquiring the farm on the Langley estate from which Martin Maher, of Ballingarry, in the county of Tipperary, was evicted, to have the farm divided instead of giving it back to him; and, if so, whether, in view of the fact that such a proceeding would be contrary to the provisions of The Land Act, 1903, he will take steps to see that Martin Maher gets back his entire holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that it is their intention to reinstate Martin Maher in a portion of his former holding, namely, 147 acres, and to utilise the remainder, amounting to 111 acres, for the enlargement of small holdings. The Commissioners hold that this proceeding is not contrary to the provisions of the Act of 1903.

Belfast Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if, as the result of the recent inquiry regarding the Royal Irish Constabulary at Belfast, it is contemplated to make any changes in the present system; and, if so, can he state what will be their extent and character.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The only changes contemplated in the Belfast police system are certain changes in the allocation of the detective force, based on the experience of the working of the detective branch in recent years. The matter is at present under consideration.

Appointments of Irish County Surveyors.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the number of county surveyors who have been appointed since the Local Government Act, 1898, came into operation; how many were Roman Catholics and Protestants respectively; how many qualified by examination; and how many were appointed by competitive examination.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) According to the records of the Local Government Board, five appointments to county surveyorships have been made since the Act of 1898 came into force. The Board have no information as to the religious belief of the persons appointed. County surveyors are required to pass a qualifying Civil Service examination. There is no competitive examination.

Increased Allowances to Irish Prison Officials.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the Treasury has recently sanctioned a grant of considerable benefit to the prison staffs in England by way of increase of salary and lodging allowance, he will consider the advisability of securing similar treatment to the officials of the Irish prison service.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I beg to refer to the Answer which I gave to the similar Question put by the hon. Member for South Meath on 18th February.† I have nothing to add at present.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. DICKINSON (St. Pancras, N.) said that he rose with some diffidence to move that the Women's Enfranchisement Bill be read a second time as he knew that there were many Members of this House who had laboured for years in the cause of woman suffrage, and who were far better qualified to speak for it than he was. Especially he felt that he almost owed an apology to the hon. Member for Merthyr and the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean for taking out of their hands the conduct of a Bill dealing with a subject to which their earnest and powerful advocacy had given impetus during recent years. But while far less competent than those hon. Members, he was not less earnest. In view of the opinion which he knew existed as to the expediency of bringing forward this measure at the present time, he could assure the House that he did so only because he was profoundly convinced that the political enfranchisement of women would immensely add to the social advantage of the kingdom, and to the advance of civilization throughout the world; and that to avoid the discussion of it in this Chamber was neither politic nor just. His task had been rendered not less difficult by incidents which had recently taken place not far from the House. He did not venture to approve or disapprove of the methods adopted by some of the more ardent advocates of woman suffrage; but he submitted to the House that even if, in their opinion, those methods had been misguided — and personally he thought they had done a great deal of damage to the cause, in the eyes both of many Members of this House and of a large section of the thinking women in the country—it was all the more necessary that this great question should have a fair and unprejudiced consideration. It should be borne in mind that whatever had been done by a section of the advocates of woman suffrage they must not allow that to overshadow the patient and persevering endeavour on the part of many high-minded and intellectual women who for the last century had laboured for a cause which they regarded as of supreme importance to their sex and to humanity. What was that cause? It was not merely the cause of woman suffrage.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 533–4.

It was really the cause of democracy, and it had been put forward on the broad principle that every citizen should have a right to vote for those who made the laws which he or she had to obey. We had acted on that principle partially in this country, and almost invariably when we extended self-government to the Colonies. The one exception we made was to exclude women from the category of citizenship. He did not propose to argue the principle of woman suffrage; he believed it was already accepted by the thinking people of this and other countries. [Cries of "No."] It had certainly been accepted by men to whom both sides of the House must give the utmost respect—John Stuart Mill, Cobden, Fawcett, Maurice, Villiers, Lord Salisbury and Archbishop Temple, all of whom were firmly convinced of the expediency and justice of granting the suffrage to women. And they knew that the two men to whom the Sovereign of this country had entrusted the affairs of the nation—the respective leaders to whom on both sides of the House they owed great respect—had announced themselves as being in favour of woman suffrage. No fewer than 400 Members of the House had also expressed their adherence to the principle of it. He did not wish to remind those hon. Members of any promises they had made; but he was justified in assuming that when the question was addressed to them their reply honestly represented what their feeling was, viz., that they were in favour of the principle of woman suffrage. Then the House in its corporate capacity had accepted the principle of woman suffrage on three separate occasions. When a Women's Franchise Bill was read a second time in 1897 it was carried by a majority of 71, 385 Members having voted. In 1904 a Resolution—

> "That the disabilities of women in respect of Parliamentary franchise ought to be removed by legislation"—

was carried by a majority of 114. If they based their ideas of the franchise on the theory that he had laid down there was no logical answer to the claim of women to have the franchise. A woman was a citizen as much as a man was. She joined in almost all industrial enterprises; her labour contributed to the wealth of the nation; she took her share in all national movements; she paid rates and taxes; she held no unhonoured place in science, art, and literature; she had made her way into almost every profession; she was to be found in almost every commercial office. Even the old argument that women should not have the vote because they could not fight had been disproved by experience. The Boer women fought for their country; and no civilised nation could now send out an army to war unless it sent with it a band of heroic nurses, who were as willing to risk their lives under the Red Cross as were the soldiers in the fighting line. It was too late to raise the objection that women held a different position as citizens from that of men. It was also too late to raise the plea of their inferiority of intellect. Long ago we had abandoned the idea of setting up any standard of intelligence or education as a requirement for the granting of the franchise. Our registration laws, with their many inconsistencies, cut out a large number of men in all grades of society from enjoying the privilege of the franchise; but there was no man, in theory, so poor, so ignorant, or so vicious, who could not, by the simple expedient of holding a roof over his head for twelve months, obtain the whole rights of citizenship. So long as it could be said that no fewer than 34,000 men voters could not read the ballot papers on which they were asked to make their cross, it could not be alleged that women should not have the right to vote because of their inferiority of intellect. If the House were to lay down a criterion of education or insist that an elector should pass an examination, he ventured to say that women would gladly submit themselves to the same test and show themselves equally competent with men to be entrusted with the right to vote. It was also too late to raise the idea that the grant of the suffrage to women would injuriously revolutionise the social relationships of the sexes. We had now had experience of woman suffrage in different parts of the globe—in four States in America, in the Colonies of Australia, in Finland, and even at our own shores in the Isle of Man. Although he did not ask the House necessarily to follow the example of smaller nationalities, still they could draw a lesson from them, and in these countries there was a unanimity of opinion that none of the forebodings as to the disturbance of the social relations between men and women had actually been realised in practice. He would quote what had been said by the late Mr. Seddon, who for so many years was Prime Minister of New Zealand. After stating that at first he had not been altogether in favour of enfranchising women, Mr. Seddon said in 1902—

> "There was a fear that woman would forego her place in society; that she would neglect her home duties by attending to public questions and politics while her family was neglected. She has not been in the least unsexed; she stands to-day higher than previously. She has kept her place in society. She has a wider sphere of action, and with experience and opportunities she is now less inclined to that narrow limit which in my opinion has been detrimental to the Empire. She has larger and deeper questions to think over. She has to use her influence in respect thereto."

If any further proof were required for what he was contending, it was to be found in the action of the Commonwealth of Australia. When the Federal Constitution was granted to the Commonwealth, two out of the five Colonies had woman suffrage, but one of the first acts which the Federal Parliament passed granted the suffrage to all women, and it might be taken for certain that if woman suffrage had acted injuriously in the constituent colonies the new Federal Parliament would not have extended the vote to all women in the Dominion of the Commonwealth. It was too late to say that women did not want the vote, and would not use it. Experience gave an absolute denial to that assertion. Wherever women had a vote they did use it. In America and in every one of our Colonies where they had the privilege women voted. He had heard indeed of complaints being raised against the women who had exercised their right to vote last week in the London County Council elections. They might have been right or wrong as to how they voted, but they certainly voted, and shewed that they valued the right to record their opinions. He believed it to be a fact that more petitions in favour of woman suffrage had been presented to the House than on any other subject. Those who had studied the question had noticed that all over the Continent the idea of granting the suffrage to women had grown enormously. There was an International Alliance of women who took a very large part in furthering the cause of female suffrage in different countries of the world. There was hardly a country on the Continent which had not a woman suffrage society working for the vote. In Sweden they had advanced almost within sight of victory, whilst in Finland the women had actually attained the suffrage by means of a revolution. He hoped that we might not arrive at a condition of affairs in this country when women would have to obtain their rights by means of a revolution. He might be asked how far the Bill, the Second Reading of which he was moving, carried out the proposition which he had laid down, viz., that every citizen should have a right to vote for the men who made the laws and conducted the affairs of the nation. Of course, it was not a Bill for adult suffrage. He could not help thinking that those hon. Members who objected to it on this score were looking for some excuse for voting against it. He could not, in justice to the House, bring forward the measure as a measure for adult suffrage. What he was anxious to obtain was an expression of opinion on the part of hon. Members on the question of whether women ought to have a vote; and it would not be fair to women or to the House to complicate it with the larger question. Moreover, the difficulties of a private Member rendered it almost impossible for him to suggest a measure for adult suffrage. A Bill of that kind would have no chance of advancing the cause which he and his hon. friends had at heart. The Bill was a limited one, such as a private Member might introduce, and all that he was asking the House to accept was the principle that neither sex nor marriage should be a disqualification for a vote. As to sex, the Bill contained the same words as were embodied in the Act of 1869, passed by a Liberal Government, to amend the Municipal Corporations Act of 1832. That Act had established the municipal vote? but had limited it to men. The Act of 1869 extended it to women. As regarded marriage, the question arose in connection with a municipal election as to whether a married woman could exercise the vote, and in the case of *R.* v. *Harrald*, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn decided that "marriage was, at Common Law, a total disqualification." In that respect also the present Bill followed precedent, namely, that of the Local Government Act of 1894, which contained the provision that—

> "A woman shall not be disqualified by reason of marriage from being an elector."

He was merely asking the House to extend to Parliamentary elections the principles of the Act of 1869 and 1894, and in so doing, to get rid of the last remnant of what he might call the savage doctrine that a woman when she marries abandons her rights as a citizen. It was objected that his Bill was too limited inasmuch as it did not enfranchise all women as he would desire it to do. He would like to see the contrary, and especially he would desire that his Bill should enfranchise the wives of the working men, whom he looked upon as the most important section of the female population of the country. He would especially like to enfranchise married women, inasmuch as the greatest claim for woman franchise was founded on the fact that the working girls of the country had now no means of advancing their claims before the House in regard to their conditions of employment, and he thought it was essential in any extension of the franchise that the mothers of these girls should have the opportunity of voting. With regard to this, however, he could only say that after all that was not the end of the story. It was only the beginning of it. He did not know whether this Bill would pass. In any case if it passed it could not come into operation until 1909, and he could not help thinking that before this Parliament expired the Government must introduce some measure dealing generally with the franchise. His belief was that the Liberal Party could not leave office until it had settled the question of the plural vote and the inconsistencies and injustices attending the ownership and lodger votes. What he urged was that they should lay down the principle that women were not to be excluded in any Bill of franchise reform, and then there would be plenty of opportunity before they went again to the country to establish a system under which women should be fairly represented among themselves. This Bill was, therefore, only a step towards the larger and better franchise. Another objection was that the Bill would give an undue preponderance to the wealthier classes. The question whether women would vote Conservative or Liberal was not one which should affect the House, but the question whether it would enfranchise one class to the detriment of another did deserve consideration. He could not help thinking that the fears on that ground were largely exaggerated. It was difficult to say what the actual operation of the Bill would be, but he was convinced that the great bulk of the women who were to be enfranchised would be those who were already upon the registers of county and borough electors. They knew something about those. Statistics had been circulated which showed that in certain towns 80 or 90 per cent. were working women. One of the papers which had been sent to Members happened to include his own constituency of North St. Pancras. It was in the North of London and was a fairly representative suburban constituency. In the year 1904, the women electors numbered 1,014, and of these 3 per cent. belonged to the wealthy, upper middle and upper classes; 37 per cent. to the well-to-do middle class, and 60 per cent. to those who had good ordinary earnings or were very poor. Since 1904 the decision of the Court of Appeal had been given in regard to latchkey voters, and this had altered the figures. It had added nearly 1,000 women voters to the county electorate in his Division, and had considerably altered the percentages. The percentage of wealthy, upper middle and upper classes was now 2 per cent.; that of the well-to-do middle class 27 per cent. instead of 37 per cent.; and that of those who had good ordinary earnings or were very poor 71 per cent. instead of 60 per cent. Those figures fairly represented what would be the situation and showed that under this Bill they would not be enfranchising the wealthy to the detriment of the poor. But it was said that they would, under the Bill, give great facilities to the extension of the ownership vote, and would accentuate the evils of faggot votes. The figures which he had given would, he thought, more than compensate for that. If, however, it was thought that the abuses which affected our old franchise system ought not to be permitted, he was sure that in Committee those who were in charge of the Bill would not object to any proposals which, while obtaining votes for women, would prevent the creation of faggot votes. There was no reason why in enfranchising woman they should not limit her rights. He was afraid he had detained the House too long, but he asked the House for the Second Reading of this Bill which he had based on the declaration it had made in 1904—

> "That the disabilities of women in respect of Parliamentary franchise should be removed."

That was all he asked on the present occasion and he desired hon. Members to address to themselves the simple question whether it was just that a woman should be denied electoral rights merely because she was a woman, and merely because she was married. He believed there could be but one answer to that in the minds of hon. Members. He was sure that there would be but one answer on the part of the people. The women's claim was for justice, and justice in the end must inevitably prevail. He trusted that the Party to which he had the honour to belong and which based its existence on the principle of electoral equality, would not stand out in history as the Party which refused to women that which in future was certain to be regarded as the elementary right of either sex.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs) said he must make an apology to the House for interposing at that early hour; but the simple reason was that he had another engagement elsewhere, which would take him away from the House for two or three hours, and therefore he wished to state at once what the attitude of the Government would be in the matter. The present was one of the not infrequent occasions when it was the duty and the necessity of the Government—of any Government—to leave the decision of the question before it to the House. There was not only, as he believed, no consentaneous opinion on the question in any part of the House, and no affectation of unanimity; but one might almost say that on every bench in the House—there might be exceptions—there was a difference of opinion. In those circumstances, of course it was for the House itself to take the course that best represented the views of its individual members. So far for the action of the Government in its relations to the House of Commons. But he had a word or two to say in regard to his own personal opinion on the matter. He was in favour of the general principle of the inclusion of women. He held that view not solely on the ground of abstract right or principle, although on that he would urge there was much to be said. For instance, a woman paid taxes and had no direct representation. She had no power of influencing those who controlled the taxation. She had to obey the laws and to act upon arrangements which affected her personal liberty in a thousand ways—arrangements in shaping which she had no share; and he thought the case had been very much intensified of late years by the much larger part that women had been, not only allowed, but invited and encouraged to take in wage-earning, in work in trades, in professional occupations, and other ways, which surely increased the inconsistency of denying her Parliamentary rights while conceding her civic duties. He thought that the stage was long past when it could be urged that a woman by her nature and by her position in society was sheltered in some mysterious way from the buffeting and turmoil of life, and was unfitted for taking any part or exercising any share in public affairs. In fact, we had given up the idea—or we ought to have given it up—which had been prevalent in former days, that a woman was, if he might use the phrase, an outlander by predestination. But the way in which he approached the question was not only that of abstract right, but also that of expediency. Was it good for the State that women should be excluded from the franchise? Was it for the public advantage? What were the questions now with which Parliament had been called upon to deal, was now dealing, and in future, he ventured to say, would in larger and larger measure be called upon to deal? There were questions affecting children—education from one end to the other; feeding in schools; such a proposal as had been before them, or would be, for municipal milk depots—that might be a good thing or a bad thing, it might be expedient or inexpedient, but he was talking of the nature of the question; there was legislation regarding infant mortality—was not that a subject calculated to sober the House of Commons? Then there was the care of pauper children. Could anyone say that these were without the range of woman's knowledge and experience? Then the whole question of temperance. Who was most affected by the hours of the closing of public-houses? Was it the man or the woman? Who was it that was most concerned? Who was, he would not say most concerned, but certainly profoundly interested in any regulations that might be imposed upon the presence of children in public-houses? The whole of these questions were domestic questions upon which the opinion of the woman was of equal value with, if not of greater value than, that of the man. Housing, sanitary laws and their administration—matters which made all the difference between life and death, between comfort and happiness on the one hand and intolerable conditions on the other—were they safe in relying solely on the political intuition and experience of the existing male electors of the country? The opinion had been borne in upon him very strongly, as years had gone on, that it was the woman's view above all others that they wanted to know upon all these questions. He thought a mere statement of the cases amounted to a *reductio ad absurdum* of the proposition that men only were qualified to deal with them. He was not very warmly enamoured of this particular Bill. His hon. friend had made out the best case he could for it, and he had admirably stated all that could be said in defence of it. But he had not quite convinced him that the Bill met his view of the case which he had just been exposing to the House. It would enfranchise a small minority of well-to-do single women. His hon. friend quoted some figures as to his own constituency, but those, of course, he could not analyse or deal with. He would have thought, and until it was proved that he was wrong he would think, that all over the country it would be as he said, it would enfranchise propertied and well-to-do ladies, but it would not touch to any such degree as was necessary the mass of working women — working men's wives. It was right as far as it went, and he acknowledged that those well-to-do persons had as much title as any of their sisters. As he had said, it was not on the ground of right that he was there to argue the case; it was on the ground of obtaining, for the instruction of and influencing the House, the actual opinion, knowledge, and desires of the mass of the women who were affected by their legislation. Therefore he would vote for the Bill as a declaration of the opinion that the exclusion of women from the franchise was neither expedient, justifiable, nor politically right.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.), in moving the rejection of the Bill, said he rose to performa rather responsible task, which had been rendered all the more difficult by the course which the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister had adopted. He could not help feeling that the Prime Minister had taken a somewhat unusual course with regard to a private Member's Bill. But for his own part he desired to thank the right hon. Gentleman, first of all, for his faint praise of this particular project, and, secondly, for the clear statement he had made that he was not enamoured of the Bill. The speech of the hon Member for North St. Pancras was somewhat singular in that the hon. Gentleman evaded the main difficulty both of his own measure and of the principle underlying it. The hon. Gentleman had certainly lived up to his promise of not arguing the principle, although he did refer by way of argument to the experience of one or two Colonies and of four States of the American Union. But after all, the experience of those countries was a small experience, and was of no value for the purpose of guiding the decisions of a great Imperial Parliament, responsible for the management of vast interests all over the globe, concerned with the administration of foreign affairs, having the control of the Army and Navy, and concerned with the well-being of scattered populations throughout the length and breadth of the world. The experience of New Zealand with its small population or even of a country with the population of London itself was of no use in guiding this House. They were countries without the responsibilities of Empire which were borne by the British Parliament. So far as the hon. Gentleman had turned to America for a justification, the experience of America was against him. The experience of America was that out of a population of 80,000,000 inhabitants there were four States with 1,000,000 population which had adopted this principle. Of those four States two had a population of less than 200,000; in the third State, Colorado, the population was larger, but the politics showed a grave condition of corruption, and people in the State attributed that to woman suffrage; and in the fourth, Utah, it was somewhat significant that the same statute which enfranchised women abolished polygamy, which alone might account for its popularity. The hon. Member had admitted with perfect frankness that it would be very difficult to tell what the effect of this Bill would be. That was a very grave admission, and one that ought to make the House pause before it passed such a Bill. The hon. Member also said he desired to take an expression of the opinion of the House. But the House was not a mere debating society and this was not a mere abstract proposition. It was a matter of serious moment in our constitutional history, and the House must have regard to what the effect would be if it passed this measure and not discuss it in an abstract or unsatisfactory manner. He did not know if the hon. Member had read his Bill when he said it could not come into force until 1909. He (Mr. Whitehead) would have thought the Bill if passed in its present form must come into force on the 1st of January next. The hon. Gentleman, however, put forward the most conclusive argument against his own measure when he said he wanted to sweep away all the amomalies of the present electoral system—plural voting, lodger votes and the like—because the Bill was based on a state of things which involved the perpetuation of those amomalies. He dissociated himself entirely from the suggestion put forward by the hon. Gentleman that there was a strong demand for this Bill. There was no public demand. Who was it that was pressing this measure on the attention of the House? There were two distinct groups of ladies; they were ladies for whose public spirit, integrity of purpose, and sincerity of mind they all felt the highest respect. But he thought they were wrong. What were those groups? One might be described as the "intellectuals." They and their predecessors had been at work for the greater part of the last century. Societies for the promotion of woman suffage had existed sporadically for a very long time, but they had never taken serious hold of the public mind; they had never established any claim to speak on behalf of their sex as a whole. They heard of figures, sometimes of 100,000 and sometimes of 300,000 as the number of persons those societies represented, but let the House take it at the maximum. What was 300,000 out of the 10,000,000 women in this country? After all their efforts that was the maximum claim they put forward to speak as the representatives of their sex. A great demonstration took place a fortnight or more ago when a total muster, gathered together from all over the country, including many ladies of distinction, of something like 2,000 women marched through the streets of London—a city which, had there been any real demand for votes for women, could itself have put into the field at least 1,000,000. With regard to the other group, which might be termed the physical force group, he would say little except that they were really a small force, a stage army which in its struggles with the police with intrepid vigour from time to time went on a merry pilgrimage to Holloway Gaol. With regard to them he said confidently that it was a big game of bluff and nothing more. It made excellent copy for the Press. The ladies were keen to get the advertisement, but the very character of their proceedings was conclusive evidence to his mind that there was nothing serious—no substantial or deep-seated demand behind them. There would be no need for such proceedings if there was any strong feeling among women on the subject. If there had been any great demand or desire on the part of women to exercise the franchise they could have shown their interest by using the opportunity which they had had for the last twenty years in connection with the franchise for local government. But everybody who had taken part in local government elections knew two things—first, that it was impossible to get women to take any interest in local politics which closely affected their own lives and homes; and, secondly, that those who had the franchise were generally unwilling to exercise it, and refused to go to the poll. The failure to exercise the one talent which had been given to them showed that there could not be any great desire for the ten talents—the greater demand now made on their behalf. Having dealt with those two groups, he passed to the Bill itself. No one could doubt that such a Bill, if carried, must have very far-reaching consequences. It was not a matter affecting the democratic conscience of the kingdom, but the political conscience. The Bill before the House, if passed, would introduce into our Constitution an entirely new basis—new in kind and new in principle. From the numerical standpoint alone it would introduce a change in our constitutional arrangements as extensive as any of the great Reform Bills. The Reform Bill of 1832 introduced into the electorate a new voting power of about 500,000; the Reform Bills of 1857 onwards introduced a little over 1,000,000; this Bill, according to the estimate of the Member for Merthyr Tydvil, would introduce 2,000,000 new voters, and that he believed was an under-estimate, because full consideration had not been given to the clause which gave the vote to married women. But taking the estimate of 2,000,000, it would effect as great a change in the Constitution as the great Reform Bills that had preceded it. An organic change in our Constitution such as that could not be undertaken at the instance of a private Member. He was sorry the Prime Minister had left, because he wished to say that it was a matter for which the Government alone must take the responsibility. They alone had access to the proper statistics and to all those facts which would have to be communicated to the country before such a great constitutional change could be effected. The responsibility must rest with the Government of the day, and the present Government was not in a position to grant facilities for such a Bill—for two reasons, the first a negative reason, the second of a more positive kind. The first reason was that the Government had no mandate. The subject was not discussed at the general election. He did not propose to discuss the proposition as to whether the mandate upon which the Government was elected was right or wrong, but he was perfectly convinced that he was right in saying that according to the spirit of the Constitution as it had been evolved, and the spirit of modern democracy under which our present arrangements were determined, no great constitutional change such as this ought to be carried through without its being submitted to, considered, and voted on by the electorate. Then the more positive reason why this Parliament should not proceed with a Bill of this kind was that it had received a mandate for a very different thing. The Government had been returned as a result of the discussions on free trade, tariff reform, education, and the great schemes of social reform which had been spoken of in principle and in detail over and over again on thousands of platforms throughout the country. What would be the responsibility of the House if such a measure were passed? The Bill would inevitably stand in the way of those great schemes of social reform upon which the House had set its heart, and for which hon. Members had worked year after year with patient devotion. The reason why he would resist it as strenuously as he could was that it would necessarily interfere with those measures of social reform. The moment Parliament touched the Constitution, the moment it began to alter the balance of the forces of the Constitution, fresh questions must arise. The Constitution was necessarily an intricate mechanism, and if a measure, such as this, altering the balance of power were passed, difficult constitutional problems would at once be opened up. Let the House follow the Bill to its logical conclusion and let them assume that it passed the House of Commons in all its simplicity and went to another place. Let them assume that it was received there in the spirit in which the Plural Voting Bill was received. It would be rejected unanimously, and it would be an object lesson to the voters of the country as to the power and responsibility of the other place. He did not know whether that object lesson was desired on either side of the House. But let them assume that the other principle was adopted and that the Bill was accepted in another place. The other House had invariably laid down the principle that the introduction of a new group of electors must be followed by a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and the redistribution must in turn be followed by an appeal to the country, so that the Government of the day might be supported by the new electorate. Having been returned for the purpose of passing beneficent schemes of social reform, he regretted that time should be wasted in discussing a measure of this kind. The present House of Commons contained men more personally identified by knowledge and experience with the social needs of the nation than any other House which had ever assembled within that building, and any attempt to plunge the House into the constitutional difficulties and dangers which would be the logical result of passing this Bill, would be to throw away a great and valuable opportunity for effecting those social reforms for which the nation was waiting. According to the view he held, the Bill, to which the hon. Member for North St. Pancras had not referred in detail, nor explained to the House, was a retrograde measure. Whereas the whole course of our constitutional development in the nineteenth century had been in the direction of a nearer approach of the classes, of the gradual enlargement relatively of the powers of the working classes of the country, this Bill would restore the balance of power to the middle and upper classes. It was based, roughly, on the lodger franchise, the property franchise, and the occupation franchise. Let them take property owners. The majority of them belonged, not to the working classes, but to the middle and upper classes; and could anybody deny that this proposal would add enormously to their power? The same consideration applied to the occupation vote, though not in the same degree. If a certain value was complied with, the double vote could be obtained. There was no difficulty or obstacle in the way of the middle and upper classes complying with the limitation which the Bill imposed, and it would be found, roughly speaking, that while a married man in the middle or upper classes could secure this franchise for his wife, the opportunity would not be available to members of the working classes. Then as to the lodger vote, they all knew that in the main that franchise was among the middle and upper classes. To them there was no difficulty whatever about occupying a separate room and complying with the condition of value. There were no difficulties or obstacles whatever in the way of the upper and middle classes obtaining lodger votes, while the working classes, speaking broadly, were not in a position to obtain them. As a matter of fact, the Bill must mean an increase of voting power to the middle and upper classes, and thus they would set back the hands of the clock. Owing to the difficulties of registration those classes would have all the electoral power as well. The difficulty of testing qualifications, and the necessity for close scrutiny and careful criticism of claims, would impose a great burden on those responsible for the duties of registration, and thus throw extra power into the hands of those who had the means to establish their claims. He ventured to say that they would be unwise if they went back from the principle of endeavouring not to give undue power to wealth, because to do so would be, as he had said, to set back the hands of the clock, and to entrench in an impregnable position the richer classes. The arguments which he ventured to bring before the House were not directed to the introduction of this Bill alone, or to its provisions. There were wider considerations and questions of principle. If the Bill were, as it was supposed to be, the prelude to adult suffrage, it would be disastrous to the Empire that power and predominance in national affairs should be shifted from the men of the country to the women. Women had already great influence on the course of our political life, and the experience they had had in the streets, in recent months, was an illustration of the manner in which their influence might be exercised. If they granted adult suffrage they ran a serious risk of having legislation passed by a majority of women, which, in his view, would be a very grave and unsatisfactory condition of things. Ultimately, the government of the country depended on force, and it would be a disastrous thing to give the technical and legal power to those who possessed no real force and were not responsible for the ultimate control of the affairs of the country. He contended that women, from the circumstances in which they existed, were really not interested in political matters. They lacked in a considerable degree the sense of proportion and of judgment, and their nervous and emotional natures unfitted them for the exercise of administrative powers, Imperial and national. Moreover, they were peculiarly susceptible to priestly influence. He said that in no spirit hostile to religion in any shape or form; but he believed that it was contrary to the interests of this country that those who were peculiarly susceptible to that form of influence should be given further power in the State. He had no doubt that if women once got the vote they would endeavour to get a seat in that House. They had a vote for local government, and they were now rightly demanding to have a share in the administration of local government. If they got a vote for Parliament their next step would be to demand a seat in Parliament. He was firmly convinced that the introduction of women into the House would prevent frankness of discussion, and lead to all kinds of subtle and underground influences. But those considerations, after all, did not touch upon what he might call the main objection to the Bill. Men and women each had their special aptitudes and adaptabilities. Women's sphere, speaking broadly, was in the home, in the nurture and education of the children, in the management of the household, in tending the sick and suffering, in relieving distress, all of which were high duties denoting the possession of delicate qualities and special abilities, which belonged to women in far greater measure than to men. The very fact that those great duties were in woman's department, kept her in no small degree from the outside affairs and struggles of life. She did not take part in public matters, nor was her inclination in that direction. As a matter of fact, they knew that in the existing tendency of society, in the circumstances of their lives, women did not interest themselves in political affairs. He said without hesitation that women as a whole did not instinctively turn to politics as a subject of thought or discussion, whereas, on the other hand, men were interested to know what was going on in the world around them. They read the newspapers, and were interested in political discussions. The matter was fundamental and lay at the base of our social organisation. Men and women had different functions and different spheres of action. For some purposes women were undoubtedly superior to men, but for political purposes men were superior to women. In the management of the affairs of this House and political questions generally he submitted that it was better in the interests of the community, the nation, and the Empire as a whole that the control of all great political issues should remain in the hands of men. There was another side to the picture. Women had a higher *rôle* in the organisation of society. In matters connected with spiritual and moral affairs, in holding up ideals for the rest of the community, they had a special function for which their intuition and refined minds rendered their services of immense value to the community, and his opinion was that it was against the interests of the State that those powers of intuition and refinement should be blunted and spoiled by being dragged down into political and Party strife. It was highly desirable that such powers as women possessed should be kept keen in order that they might continue to guide and inspire other people irrespective of Party considerations. In putting this view before the House he was only upholding the highest and best ideal of womanhood, not only in the interests of women themselves, but in the interests of the community as a whole. It should not be forgotten that there were rules and orders which bound society together apart from any laws, and recently women had broken those fundamental rules by exercising physical force against those who were bound not to retaliate. It was because they had broken and offended against those principles that the agitation had not received the general support of the women of the community as a whole. He had placed before the House arguments, some of transient and some of permanent importance. In conclusion, he appealed to the House not to upset the balance of the Constitution in the way proposed by this Bill, which he believed sincerely was one which the House ought not to pass. He therefore begged to move that it be read a second time that day six months.

*MR. BERTRAM (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) said he had much pleasure in seconding the Amendment proposed by his hon. friend. He was very grateful to him for the comprehensive way in which he had put forward his objections to woman suffrage. The archives of *Hansard* contained records of many debates on the subject, and he had found in all of them the same kind of academic *a priori* reasoning on both sides. In his study of former debates upon the subject there was only one grain of comfort he could find, and that was that upon all occasions when a Woman Suffrage Bill had been brought forward the actual measure proposed had been roughly criticised by both friend and foe. So far as the present debate had gone the traditions of previous debates had been fully maintained. There could be very little question that however uninteresting and unreal previous debates might have been, the present occasion was different from them inasmuch as outside this House there was a real and genuine expectation that the proposals contained in the Bill were on the eve of accomplishment. There were certain ladies who regarded the passage of a Bill of this kind as something likely to produce the millennium. No doubt every Member of the House had at one time or another spoken handsomely of the millennium, but if this Bill was going to bring it any nearer he would regard it with the greatest dissatisfaction. He thought those who supported the principle of preserving the Parliamentary franchise for the male sex and the male sex alone were entitled to ask whether the very shrill and noisy agitation which had been going on outside the House really represented any deep-seated desire on the part of the general body of the women of the country. So far as he had been able to ascertain the facts, he confessed that the evidence was of the most meagre and unsatisfactory kind. All they were able to turn to was a Return issued by the House last November of the number of petitions in favour of woman suffrage presented within the last sixteen years. He found in that Return that the total number of signatories was 193,000. In 1875 it was alleged that the number of signatories in favour of woman suffrage was no less than 430,000. So far as they had been able to arrive at the feelings of womankind upon the question, he was inclined to believe that there was less disposition on their part than there was thirty years ago to acquiesce in a proposal of this character. He thought there were very good reasons for that. Even if many hon. Members could not recognise it women themselves recognised the great difference, the essential, natural, fundamental difference, which divided them from men, which limited the scope of their activities, and gave to their lives a direction altogether different from that which men had to pursue. He did not believe that the bulk of the women of the country desired the franchise, but even if the bulk of them did desire it, he would still be prepared to resist it. Reference had been made to the Colonial argument, and the House had been told that in some of our Colonies women were admitted to the Parliamentary franchise. He thought the Colonial argument was a rather dangerous one, because it could be used indifferently in support of tariff reform and of Home Rule for Ireland. Therefore, he did not think it was the kind of argument to which great weight should be attached. But what was the position of the Colonies in comparison with Great Britain? Had the Colonies emerged from the parochial state, and had they anything but domestic matters to contend with? The Parliament of this country had to frame the policy and determine our relations with the great and mighty Powers of the world. Although in this country women were admitted to a direct voice in regard to domestic, local and parochial matters, and wisely, he thought it would be a disaster to admit them to deal equally with men in matters affecting the position of Great Britain in foreign politics. The ultimate issue of Parliamentary Government in this country would soon or late be the establishment of the franchise upon a manhood suffrage basis. He did not think there was any question about that, and ultimately this would be an issue submitted to the electors. He wished to point out that if they were going to have the franchise on a two-sex basis, then they would have the policy of the country dictated and controlled by a majority which would not be a masculine majority. Their policy would be dictated by a feminine majority, competing with the policy of Germany, France, and Russia, where the direction of affairs would be determined by a masculine virile male vote. That was a risk which the House ought to take with very great reluctance. He repeated that he did not believe that the women of the country desired to have the Parliamentary franchise. They had been told that there were 400 Members of the House pledged to vote for a Bill of this kind, and they had heard a good deal of talk about mandates. It was an almost universally accepted constitutional doctrine upon the Government benches that a majority of the House elected upon other issues had no right whatever behind the backs of the voters to pass legislation of enormous constitutional importance which was not before the country at the previous general election. He understood that pledges had been given by 400 Members of the House in favour of the enfranchisement of women. To whom were those pledges given? Could it be suggested that they had taken their instructions from their constituents on the subject merely because they had answered an occasional heckler casually at a village meeting? If an hon. Member here and there said in answer to a question—"Yes, I am generally in favour of the principle of admitting women to equal voting rights with men," that was not putting the issue before the electors at the general election. It seemed to him that hon. Members who went into the lobby in support of the Bill would be committing a Parliamentary and constitutional offence, as gross and as unforgiveable as that which was committed by hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway on the opposite side of the House when they passed the Education Bill of 1902. He hoped that a large number of those who had casually given pledges would think twice before they voted in support of this measure. It had been computed that 1,500,000 new voters would be brought within the electorate by the Bill. Was that a matter for a private Member's Bill? In 1884, when Mr. Gladstone added 2,000,000 agricultural labourers to the voters of the country by the extension of the county franchise, it was by means of a Bill of first class importance brought in by the Government. It was a measure on which the previous election had been fought, and whole weeks of the session were devoted to the consideration of it. To-day they were invited by the Prime Minister to support a Bill which would enfranchise nearly as many new voters as Mr. Gladstone's Bill of 1884, and which introduced for the first time not only in the history of this country but in the history of any country in Europe an entirely new and dangerous principle in the system of government under which the nation lived. It seemed to him that that was an unconstitutional position, and one which the House should adopt only after the most careful thought. The general principle that women ought not to be deprived of the franchise was put that afternoon by the Prime Minister when he asked—Is it just to refuse to women the Parliamentary vote? That was a question which it was extremely difficult to answer, because it assumed that the right to the Parliamentary franchise rested upon property and upon the basis of paying taxes. Though that was one basis it was not the sole basis, and it was not the true basis of representative Government. Lunatics were taxed, but they were not allowed to vote; aliens had to pay taxes, but they were prevented from voting; and if hon. Members had been asked at the election if they were prepared to give votes to the poorest of the poor their answer would have been, "We think they are the men who ought to have votes." One could not state precisely what the basis of the franchise was. Ultimately it came back to the basis of force and the capacity to defend the country. He did not think it could be suggested that the sole basis of the franchise was merely the payment of taxes. He asked the House what advantage they expected the country to derive under the Bill? Were they going to obtain representation in the House of Commons of interests, aims, and objects which were incapable of representation under the present system? He ventured to think that they would not do so. The object of a good representative system was to give to every section of the community the right to make its grievances heard and to have its hopes and aspirations advocated in the Parliament of the country. Did they suggest that under this Bill they would bring in new classes of persons who were at present inarticulate? It would not be so. The further down they went in the social scale the stronger his belief was that with every extension of the franchise they would find the vote given to men was used just as much to give expression to the misfortunes and hardships of women as to give expression to their own misfortunes and hardships. He did not believe therefore that under this Bill they would do anything to assist in bringing before the House new claims which could not find expression at the present time. What under the terms of the Bill they would do would be to add to the electorate a solid block of new and indifferent voters who would not judge of great questions as voters should, because the women of the country—the people proposed to be enfranchised—were persons who did not care for the franchise and did not ask for it. The Prime Minister had stated that under the municipal franchise, women had been invited to take part in local government. That was all very well, but it seemed to him that they had to make out the strongest possible case for inviting women to go further, despite their own repugnance which was hardly doubtful, into the arena of politics in the struggle and strife of which men engaged. There were many unlovely things about men, but he thought, perhaps, the most unlovely thing about them was politics. It was one of those careers in which absolute honesty of purpose and absolute sincerity was impossible. Hon. Gentlemen seemed to be divided in opinion in regard to that matter, but everyone knew that the calls of Party loyalty and the security of one's seat very often compelled a Member of Parliament to shirk an issue or only to half state a truth which he ought to state in full. It was perfectly idle to pretend the contrary. Women were being invited to enter that arena at the present moment. He was quite convinced that as a body they did not demand the vote. Women were invited by this Bill to devote some of their time to political work, and to devote less of their energies to the great duties of maternity and education which were the greatest glories of womanhood.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Whitehead.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*SIR CHARLES McLAREN (Leicestershire, Bosworth) said the hon. Gentleman had stated with great eloquence one argument which had always been brought against this proposal, and after all it was the only argument which it was very difficult to controvert, namely, the argument of sex. But unfortunately that argument came too late. Forty years ago it would have had great force in any British House of Commons, but many things had happened in the meantime. We had admitted women to the learned professions. We had admitted them to a large place in local government. We had given them every kind of franchise except the one under discussion. Men had never relieved women of the burden of obtaining their own existence. They contemplated with equanimity the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of wage-earning women working for their living without getting a penny towards their support from men. They had allowed women step by step to engage with them in their struggle for a livelihood in nearly every department. In regard to the military argument we did not as a nation say that it was the duty of every man to defend his country. We paid our soldiers with money derived from the taxation which women as well as men paid. This question had been presented to the House of Commons for forty years, and every argument which had been used to-day against the Bill had been used before. The present debate differed from all previous debates in one particular. It was this: there was now a large and powerful Labour Party in the House — a Party which had never before listened to the debates on the subject. His hon. friend the Member for Essex had said that the enfranchisement of women would put a stop to social reforms. He did not know what he meant by that. He was glad to see his hon. friend the Member for Leicester present, because he wanted to hear the verdict of the Labour Party upon a proposition that the enfranchisement of women would put a stop to social reform. He believed that the hon. Member for Leicester and his friends were satisfied that this was not a rich woman's question—a rich woman's fad. It was a question which lay at the root of the happiness and welfare of vast multitudes of the working women of the country. All experience had shown that where franchises had been granted to men their social position had improved, their wages had increased, the conditions of their labour had been ameliorated. The Labour Party knew only too well the conditions against which women workers had to contend, and he believed that they also were of opinion that the extension of the franchise to women would improve their position, and, by raising the level of their employment, help to safeguard and further improve the conditions of the labour of men. He quite admitted that as the Bill stood it might be argued that it would mainly give the franchise to the richer classes of women, to the exclusion of the poorer. He felt the force of the argument; but he had looked into the figures and he was satisfied that the number of women belonging to the working and the lower middle classes who would be enfranchised by the Bill as it stood would in most constituencies largely exceed the number of the richer classes. He would point out that a Reform Bill could not be brought in on a Friday afternoon for the purpose of granting adult suffrage to all classes of men and women. Half a dozen different franchises might have been created, some of which would be indefensible, although many of them he would support. It would have been foolish, therefore, for the supporters of woman suffrage to attempt more than they had done. What they said was, "Give the franchise to women on the same terms as it is given to men at present." In a measure of this kind it was necessary to take the line of least resistance. He could not see that the Bill was revolutionary. The franchise had been given to women from time to time, and the Colonies had, not all at once, but step by step, conceded the franchise to all women. Only a few weeks ago women voted with men in the elections for the Federal Parliament for Australia. His hon. friend had spoken of this as an Imperial question, and he would remind the House that the Colonial Premiers were coming to this country supported by the votes of women as well as of men, and he thought the time had come when Englishwomen should be given the same privileges which their Colonial sisters enjoyed. He considered that Englishwomen were the best in the world. They were more cultured, more intelligent, than other women; they were sympathetic, and virtuous, and had all the qualities which made great citizens. They had shown enormous interest in the affairs of the nation. Believing as he did that the passage of this measure could not be long delayed, he hoped the House would to-day vote on the principle, and the principle only, of the Bill. He did not think that from the Parliamentary point of view the Bill should go further into discussion, but if it did it should be in Committee of the whole House. His hon. friend who had brought in the Bill had explained that he did so for the purpose of eliciting a vote of the House, aye or no, whether women should have a vote, and hon. Members who voted for the Second Reading would feel that they were not committing themselves to all the details of the Bill.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said he would not have ventured to engage the attention of the House had it not been that a distinguished writer in a periodical had stated that the women of Wigan were in favour of woman suffrage, and that that was a fair argument in favour of this Bill. At the last election he had been returned for the borough of Wigan by a larger majority than ever before, although it was known that he was distinctly opposed to the Bill. Therefore he felt himself bound to say a few words in vindication of the opinion of the borough which he represented. Several arguments had been adduced in favour of the Bill, but no one had ventured to say that any European State, large or small, had adopted the principle of woman suffrage. That principle had been followed, no doubt, in some of our Colonies; but it appeared to him that the position of our Colonies was different in a large degree from that of the Mother Country. In the first place, they were new States, and much in their Constitution was experimental and tentative. How far woman suffrage had been successful in the Colonies he did not venture to say; but he would assert, after conversation with many Colonials, that the opinion in favour of woman suffrage was by no means universal. When he crossed the Atlantic to the great States of America, he found that although in some of the new and remote States, which were only recently territories, woman suffrage had been adopted; in others where it had been proposed it had been supported only by small minorities. He desired to call the attention of the House to the gigantic character of the proposed change, and to express his belief that the enfranchisement of women must be followed by legislation of a much wider character. That opinion had been, to his mind, confirmed by the speech of the Prime Minister, who had said that he accepted the principle but condemned the Bill, because it did not go sufficiently far and because it did not abandon the principle which was now part of our electoral system, viz., the principle of responsibility being given only where rates were paid. The Prime Minister desired to give the vote to women who did not pay rates, as well as to women who did. That was really the Bill which the right hon Member for the Forest of Dean brought forward some time ago, viz., to give the suffrage universally to men and women, which, in a country like ours, where women were largely predominant, would give women the ascendency in the affairs of the Empire. The late Sir William Harcourt in a speech which he made in 1897 said after careful study of the question, that it was not a sound political argument to say that the women would be divided in opinion the same as men, because he believed that the women as a whole, in a moment of excitement, would vote in the same direction and exercise practically the supreme power in the State. They had been told very often that women had a certain influence, that it would not be fair or just to them that they should be excluded from the exercise of that influence; but men, by their experience, by their knowledge, by their contact with the world, were more expert than women in judging the great governing and supreme questions of the affairs of the Empire—questions of peace and war, questions of our enormous commercial interests which involved severe labour, painful toil, and an expenditure of energy and power which Providence had not given to women in the same degree as to men. Those who had the superior knowledge and greater aptitude to deal with those questions ought, in his judgment, to have the predominating voice. If it was a question of war, surely a man who had to go on sea or land and take part in war was a better judge of a question of that kind than a woman could be, however skilful in dialectics she might be. Then there was the argument that women if enfranchised would seek seats in that House. That notion was ridiculed; but some years ago the vote was given, and he thought rightly, to women in local matters; and objection was raised then that if women had votes they would in a short time seek seats in local councils. The carrying out of that idea was for the moment deferred; but this year there was to be the Government measure making that proposal. Thus there was good reason to apprehend that if the Parliamentary vote were granted to women the claim to seats in Parliament would necessarily follow. That would be a gigantic change, so large that he was perfectly sure from his conversation with many Members that they had never thought the question out, and had not realised the inevitable consequences of such a measure. It would be a transfer of power of the very largest character, which must have the greatest influence on the future of the country, and must affect, for good or for evil, the future conditions of this great Empire. As Sir W. Harcourt said in 1897, so gigantic a change ought not to be brought forward, still less carried, on a Friday afternoon on the initiative of a private Member, and without the absolute and full concurrence and direction of the Government of the day. Surely some lessons should be learned from the practice of recent generations and they should hesitate to make changes in the Constitution of the country the effect of which they could not see, but which, having been made, could never be reversed.

*MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn) said he rose for the purpose of supporting the Second Reading of the Bill. The general statement of the case of the right of women to the exercise of the franchise had been so ably stated by previous speakers that he would not deal with that side of the matter. There were no arguments against the enfranchisement of women, though there were plenty of excuses, many masculine prejudices, and some feminine ignorance. He regretted very much that the Prime Minister should lend the weight of his influence and authority to the statement that this Bill would not touch, if he might be permitted to use his words, the working women of the country, but would only add a small minority of wealthy women to the register. That statement had been repeated in one form or another many times, and had been indicated in the terms of many of the Amendments which stood on the Paper, including that for which the hon. Member for North Paddington was responsible. That hon. Gentleman had a reputation as a statistician and social reformer, and he very much regretted to find that the hon. Gentleman, by his Amendment, said the Bill altogether ignored the claims of working women. He was anxious that his hon. friend should retain the reputation which he had so deservedly won, and he wished to show him that if he lent his name and authority to statements like that, he would lose the confidence of everyone, man and woman, who had practical knowledge of the conditions of the people. Some two or three years ago he was chairman of the Independent Labour Party, and they had to deal with this very point. At the request of his colleagues he supervised a census which was taken in something like fifty different parts of the country, representative of every class of the population, with the object of ascertaining what proportion of the women enfranchised by such a measure as this would belong to the working classes. That census was undertaken by members of their own organisation in different parts of the country, and with the Speaker's permission he would like to give the result of it to the House. But before doing so he might mention that four questions were addressed to those who were asked to make the inquiry. First of all they were asked to state the total number of electors in the ward or parish with which they were dealing, the number of women voters, the number of women voters of the working class, and the number of women voters not of the working class. It was impossible to lay down a strict definition of the term "women of the working class," but for this purpose the definition acted upon was those who worked for wages, those domestically employed, and those who were supported by the earnings of wage earning children. The municipal registers were examined, and it was found that in the fifty districts there was a total of 372,000 electors, while the total number of women voters was 59,000, of whom 49,000 or about 82·4 per cent. were working women. If he might go back for one moment to the statistics in regard to the Amendment of his hon. friend the Member for North Paddington, he would like to point out that the figures which were given in regard to the social condition of the country enabled them to arrive at a conclusion which approximated to the figures which he had quoted. They had been told that the number of people with incomes exceeding £160 a year was 1,000,000, and the number of people with incomes exceeding £160 a year and below £700 was 750,000. He did not think it would be disputed that a very large number of the class between £160 and £700 were not of the propertied class, and a very large number of these people had nothing but what they earned, and working very hard earned a very precarious subsistence. If they took the hon. Member's figures, and they appeared to be accepted by the opponents of the Bill, this measure would enfranchise about 1,000,000 or 1,250,000 women, and his hon. friend must admit that there must be in that 1,250,000 a considerable number who did not belong to the propertied classes. Reverting to the unfortunate statement of the Prime Minister that the passing of this Bill would only enable single women with property to get on the register in very large numbers under the lodger franchise, let them appeal to the facts. Under the Registration Acts the sons of the well-to-do had for many years been entitled to be registered as lodger voters, and had they taken advantage of that opportunity? How many lodger voters were there upon the electoral roll of the United Kingdom to-day? He ventured to think the number would surprise hon. Members. Among nearly 7,500,000 registered electors there were but 202,000 lodger votes, and to show further that there was no burning anxiety on the part of those who were entitled to be registered as lodgers to get on the register he might add that the number of lodger votes declined last year by no less than 10 per cent. Therefore if they took the most exaggerated estimate as to the number of propertied people who would be enfranchised under this Bill they would not be more than one-fifth of the total enfranchised. Then again it had been said that women did not want votes; to say so showed a complete ignorance of facts. He submitted that there was no agitation of to-day which was so great, so vigorous, and so widespread as the agitation of women for votes. By every means at their disposal, legally and illegally—and their means of agitation were limited compared with those of men—women had declared their demand to vote. The hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill had referred to the demonstration which was seen in the streets of London a few weeks ago. He evidently obtained his numbers from the *Daily Mail.* He would have thought that Members sitting on the other side of the House would have gone to a more Radical organ for their information. One of the leading Liberal organs described that demonstration as one of the most imposing that had ever been seen in the streets of London during the present generation. [Several HON. MEMBERS: Which journal.] The journal was the *Tribune.* But supposing he granted for the moment that women did not want the vote, he would submit that that was the very reason why the vote should be given to them. To lay down the principle that no legislation should be enacted unless the majority of the people whom it was to benefit had expressed their opinion in favour of it would be a negation of all social legislation. Did the people who were benefited by the Education Act of 1870 declare that they wanted it? Did the people who were benefited by the various sanitary measures that had been passed say that they wanted them? Had there been an express mandate from the people in regard to any one of the items of legislation mentioned in the King's Speech of the present session? No; progress had been made and would continue to be made, but not in obedience to the demand of the majority of the people. Progress had been made and would continue to be made by the efforts and determination of an intelligent minorty. He said an "intelligent minority." Therefore even if it was proved that a majority of women did not want the vote, that was a reason why they should be given the vote. He took the further point, that it was not for the good of the State that there should be any large number of its adult population responsible for the discharge of civic duties and yet not permitted to take part in deciding what the legislation and administration of the country should be. A petition, with 21,000 signatures attached to it, had been presented to the House to the effect that women did not want the vote, but that did not represent the views of the women of the country. A petition from those who did not want the vote was no answer to the demand of those who did want it. There was no reason why women who did wish to have the vote should be deprived of it because others did not want it. There were slaves in America who fought against their own independence, and there were cases of moral serfdom where if they wanted to save the immortal soul of the individual it was their duty to strike by force the shackles off his wrists and compel him to be free in spite of himself. Every women's organisation of a political character, with one exception, was behind this Bill, and that exception ought to recommend the Bill to the Liberal Party, for it was the Primrose League. Sixty-eight thousand women had signed petitions for enfranchisement in terms of the Bill, and votes had been taken in different counties. In Lancashire the opinion of the women in some of the Weavers' Unions had been taken by ballot, and 12,270 had demanded that the vote for women should be made a trade union question, while only 2,100 had voted against it. His hon. friend the Member for Clitheroe had had presented to him a petition signed by 5,500 women trade unionists asking him to ballot for a Bill or move a Resolution in the terms of this Bill. At Wigan the woman's suffrage candidate polled 2,100 votes. This Bill was wrongly described by its introducer as a limited Bill. It limited nothing. It was an extension of the franchise, and was only limited in the sense of not being a complete solution of the problem with which it dealt, because it was desired to concentrate on the single issue of sex disability. He claimed that the facts that day brought forward were sufficient to dissipate what was no more than a prejudice where it was not an excuse. He believed this to be the greatest of all measures with which they were called upon to deal. From a profound conviction of the true justice and the wisdom of the proposal he supported it. It was not a mere franchise they were considering. It was a great moral question. It would affect the whole moral, economic, and social conditions of women and the relationships between the sexes. He believed the passing of the measure would be more fruitful of good for the future of the human race than any single act of legislation to which this Legislature could direct its attention.

*MR. MASSIE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) said it must be a great satisfaction to the House that the opposition to this Bill was free from the joke and gibe which used to characterise such discussions. The situation was a very serious one, and the question was far more difficult than might be imagined from some of the confident speeches of the supporters of the Bill. The proposal involved a fundamental, constitutional change in the basis of sovereign authority, the electorate; and that change had never at any general election been a plain, clear, vital issue before the country. Members who were in favour of this proposal had told him that their constituents took very small interest in the question, and the candidate who supported woman suffrage was usually regarded by the voters as one who cherished a harmless fad. He himself at the election was asked only one question on the subject, and that not by a voter, but by an organiser of the Women's Liberal Federation, a body which made the support of woman suffrage a test of Liberalism, and insisted on it as a condition of their help. That help was withdrawn from him, but he was not aware that he suffered very much in consequence. The women who worked in his constituency took a wider, broader view of Liberalism. But he did not rely on individual instances, however numerous. Out of the addresses issued by the 670 Members of the House, only forty-eight contained the slightest reference to woman suffrage, and only thirteen to adult suffrage; so that only sixty-one contained any reference, direct or indirect, to the subject. Of the addresses of those hon. and right hon. Members who sat on the front Ministerial Bench only one referred to woman suffrage. It might, therefore, be taken that it was not a live question at the general election. If it was a live question why was it not mentioned in the addresses, and how could a large proportion of the 670 Members of the House join those who would plunge the country into a revolutionary change in the basis of sovereign authority when that question was not a live question at the general election? They had been told over and over again that 420 Members had pledged themselves to a Woman Suffrage Bill. He would not contest that statement, although he did know that names had been put down which ought not to have been there. But assuming that 420 members had made such a promise, did they promise to support such a Bill as this? This Bill in some respects was entirely different from any Woman Suffrage Bill previously introduced into this House. It included married women, those who had a joint occupancy with their husbands of houses worth £20 a year. He had heard that a hope had been expressed that under it every married woman might be made a lodger in her husband's house. That might not be true, though it came from a prominent authority; but at any rate, it was safe to say that every grown-up daughter could be given the lodger franchise, and every daughter and every wife could have a property qualification. What then had been the nature of these pledges? Had hon. Members pledged themselves to support a Bill giving the franchise to married women? Had they explained to their constituents that they would support a Bill which would enable the well-to-do classes of the country to manufacture faggot votes? To whom and when were pledges given? Certainly not in the addresses which were distributed among the constituents. Rarely, he believed, to electors. They were given mostly in answer to questions directly or indirectly put by the central organisations who circularised candidates from London and other places, and who made it a condition of their help that candidates should support a woman suffrage measure. Many hon. Members regarded that question as likely to be academic for a long time. One hon. Member had told him that when he gave that pledge he thought the question would be an academic one for the next ten years. One thing was quite certain, and that was that even if the 420 gentlemen had pledged themselves their pledges did not prove that the electors as a body took any real interest in the question, or that it was a plain, clear issue fairly placed before them. With regard to the statements that had been made that at National Liberal Federation meetings resolutions had been passed in favour of woman suffrage, he could only say that those meetings did not regard such resolutions as serious: the opponents had either abstained or gone away, while the enthusiasts who stayed included many women delegates who had got themselves sent down to the meetings by men's associations. But the other day 240 delegates assembled at the National Liberal Federation General Committee. Out of those 240, seventy-three voted against the resolution and seventy-eight in all voted for it, including the women. He maintained that that result must be taken as a kind of set back in the National Liberal Federation. As a matter of fact he believed that a good many men who had not thought about the matter before were now rubbing their eyes and looking at it with open vision. Nothing had happened to shake his contention that this revolutionary change in the basis of sovereign authority was not an issue at the last general election. Men who had sleepily acquiesced were now waking up and wishing they had looked the question straight in the face before. Not only was the opinion of the public immature, the opinion of the leaders of woman suffrage required some maturing. He believed he was right in saying that the hon. Member for North St. Pancras was nearly dragged in pieces by the wild horses of conflicting opinion on this subject, and that four Bills had been and were not, and this was the fifth. One section of the supporters of woman suffrage wanted that suffrage to be on the same terms as the present suffrage for men. They were prepared to face all the evils of the present system, all the anomalies of the present suffrage, and of plural voting, which would be intensified if that franchise was extended to women. A second section did not wish the vote for married women or for women lodgers. A third proposed adult suffrage, which would mean the introduction of ten or twelve millions of women on to the register, and the overwhelming of the present voters even if the extra three millions of men were added. A fourth desired a vote for women on logical grounds, but refrained from pursuing the matter to its logical issue. They had no desire that women should enter Parliament, or sit on the Front Bench. A fifth section, represented by hon. Members like the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, went, to use a colloquial expression, "the whole hog." The right hon. Baronet was prepared to move that women should be admitted to the House, and therefore to hold office under the Crown. But there came in the disqualifications of sex, into which he did not propose to enter. He would only say that if a woman could not fight—and the House had no desire that she should fight—she could not therefore take command of the Channel squadron, she could hardly be First Lord of the Admiralty and send orders to that squadron which she was not fit to command. An argument from logic adduced in favour of the Bill was that the municipal franchise having been given the Imperial franchise should follow. But the municipal franchise affected only those local matters which lay at the doors of the voters and it did not affect the question of the basis of sovereign authority. He would remind the House that in the United States there was only one State that had given its women the municipal vote—the State of Kansas—and since that time that State had resolutely refused to confer upon them the higher franchise, even when the question was remitted to the people themselves by a referendum. The argument that representation and taxation should go together had no reference to individuals. It originated in the quarrels between the Colonies and the Mother Country. Was the franchise to rest on a cash basis or upon bricks and mortar? If it did not so rest the argument from taxation and representation going together fell to the ground. It was said that women ought to have the vote because they demanded it. Were all wants to be satisfied, or was their satisfaction to be regulated by the safety of the State? As to this demand, the petition with 21,000 names presented that afternoon showed that those who called for the franchise had not proved that the sex as a whole demanded it. The forwards of this movement could not claim to represent their sex. The textile workers and other workwomen wanted the vote simply because they had been told that it would increase their wages. But there was also, he humbly believed, some logic against it. It was founded on the disqualification of the sex. Woman's limitations stood within bounds which nature herself had fixed, and which might be called "predestination," if they would. He had said this was a revolution. The present basis of the franchise was a male basis. It was a commonplace to say that the ultimate resort of sovereign authority was force. With force women as a sex had no concern. If they had, it was exceptional, or else it was farcical; and he would ask the hon. Member who quoted the Boer women whether he desired the use of force by women to be largely extended. It was an old argument on which he did not wish to lay more stress than it deserved that the female sex was disqualified for sovereign authority because they could not serve in the Navy, Army, or Volunteers; but while it was true that women could not fight, there was another side of the question, which was that they could not be fought. Even if a woman were violent and disorderly, hands could hardly be laid on her without an outcry from herself and her friends. It was but a step from this Bill to adult franchise; and then, as there were in the United Kingdom 1,000,000 more women than men, the government of the country would pass into the hands of women. How many women were ready to pay for that consummation? Let them look at possible results, because those who called themselves statesmen were bound to take into consideration all possible results. If a great majority of women, having with them, as they could have very often, a small minority of men, took up a particular line of national policy with which the great majority of men disagreed, were the great majority of men going to stand it? And if they would not stand it whom were they going to fight? Because they could not fight the women. It was all very well to pooh-pooh this argument; it would be better to answer it. If women in France had the franchise at the present moment where would the country be? In the hands of the Clericals. Did hon Members think that the men of France would stand that? He was well aware that they ought not to be guided altogether by the foreseen effects of their actions, but they could not altogether disregard them. The late Mr. Gladstone had been quoted as saying that he would not be led away by the fear of effects. But Mr. Gladstone was vehemently opposed to the extension of the franchise to women—he had a postcard from Mr. Gladstone himself in that sense and Mr. Gladstone's opposition to the franchise for women redeemed the opposition from absurdity. If women were to be predominant in the sovereign authority; if those who could not be fought were to settle the national policy, they would be placed in a position, not of equality, but of superiority, and then the time would not be long in coming when the subjugation of women would be more effective than it had been for a long while. The House had been told that such fears were ridiculous because no such effects had been seen in the Colonies; but in the Colonies the vote did not give sovereign power. The Colonies had not to decide the national questions of peace or war. They were also places with small populations, and in every case the women were a considerable minority. Again, in the Colonies the conditions were different. There was no Established Church, no great clerical class, and no standing Army, no great military class. The advocates of woman suffrage were very careful to avoid saying much about the United States. The influence of women was very powerful there, and yet only four States gave the full franchise to women, and those were mushroom States in the West, Ohio, Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. In Utah the Mormon Church was dominant, and when Utah was admitted into the Federation that Church got woman sufferage inserted into the constitution; for it had found its women's votes useful. The population of those States was very scattered, ranging from less than one to five persons per square mile. In all the other States of America the efforts to get the full franchise for women had utterly failed, for these two reasons among others—that it had been proved that those women who agitated for the franchise did not speak for their sex, and that experience had shown that women did not take the trouble to vote in any large numbers, except when mischievous issues, as for example those of sectarianism, were raised. When a referendum was taken in Massachusetts, the sexes voting separately, it was found that out of 575,000 possible women voters only 22,000 voted in the affirmative, and the movement in the United States might now be said to be set back, while many women were organising themselves against it. By all means let women be put on deputed authorities, but to put women into the position of exercising the sovereign authority, still more of ruling over that sovereign authority, would be a revolution, and such a revolution ought not to be rushed, it ought not to be carried into law—nay, it ought not to be supported in that House till the question had been put as a clear and vital issue before the electors.

MR. OSMOND WILLIAMS (Merionethshire) said he had neither the time nor the inclination to try and answer the very clever special pleading of those who moved the rejection of this Bill. He supported it because he looked upon it as a demand for the liberties of the women of England and as a protest against the injustice which had for centuries, indeed always, brooded over the character and destiny of one half of the human race. Nowhere else under any circumstances had a demand ever yet been made for the liberties of one half of the race. In all great reforms, the majority, or the rulers, had invariably met the claim, no matter what the claim might be, with the answer, "You are not fit for such a privilege." Luther asked the Pope for liberty for the masses to read the Bible. The answer was, "The common people cannot be trusted with the Word of God." "Let them try," said the great reformer; and the history of three centuries of development and purity proclaimed the result. The masses in France asked for their civil rights, the right to vote and for direct representation in the Government. The rich and lettered classes and the cultivated intellects said, "You cannot be made fit." "Let us try," they said. That France was not to-day, as Russia and Spain, utterly crushed beneath the weight of a thousand years of misgovernment was the answer to those who doubted the ultimate success of this claim. Woman stood at the door of the House that day and said to those who declared she had no ability, "You tell me I have no intellect; give me a chance." "You say I only embarrass politics. Let me try." The answer was the same old stale argument which was addressed to the Jews of England in that very House of Commons. They were told, "You are only fit to make money. You are not fit to enter the halls of Parliament and the ranks of the Imperial Army." "Let us try," they said. Let them look round at the House of Commons now. How cogent was that eloquent appeal of Macaulay's at the time—

> "What right have we to take this question for granted? Throw open the doors of your House of Commons, throw open the ranks of your Imperial Army before you deny the eloquence of the countrymen of Isaiah or the valour of the descendants of the Maccabees."

It was the same now with them. They said, "Throw open the doors of your polling booths and give to the sisters of the Martineaus, the George Eliots, and the Somervilles the same opportunity for political culture as you have, and let the result show what their capacities and intellect really are." This was the question which they ought to put to themselves: "Has God made woman capable, morally, intellectually, and physically, of taking part in human affairs?" What God had made her able to do was, to his mind, a strong argument that He intended she should do. Did our sense of natural justice not dictate that the being who was to suffer under laws should first personally assent to them; that the being whose industry government was to burden should have a voice in fixing the character and amount of that burden? While woman was admitted to the gallows, the gaol, and the tax list, we had no right to debar her from the ballot box. He was not in the least disturbed as to the argument as regarded women's capacity, because he knew that the humblest and the feeblest man had the same civil rights as the most gifted. No intellect, although it might attain to the Alpine heights of, say, a Cecil or a Balfour, had any title to additional civil rights or any claim to greater civil privileges than the humblest individual who knew only the first elements of his alphabet. Supposing woman was intellectually inferior to man, she was still a tax-paying and responsible member of our civil society. Granted that George Eliot could not have been Shakespeare, that Miss Pankhurst could not have been Shelley, or that a Gibson girl could not have painted the Transfiguration, was that any reason for debarring them from civil rights? John Smith never could be and never would be John Morley. Was he, therefore, to be disfranchised? Was he, therefore, to be put under guardianship and forbidden to vote? Supposing woman, though equal to, differed essentially in her intellect from man, was that any ground for disfranchising her? Should the Stephensons and Watts say to the Raphaels "Because you cannot make steam engines therefore you cannot vote." Should the Napoleons and Wellingtons say to the Gladstones and Beaconsfields, "Because you cannot lead armies, therefore you cannot govern States, and shall have no civil rights?" The thing was absurd. Let them put themselves in woman's place. Was any man prepared to give up his right to vote? Supposing a man were to say to them, "I will arrange what is to be your business. I will look after your business, and I will vote for you." How ridiculously impertinent it would all seem. And yet there were few of them who had the sense to laugh at the consummate impertinence with which every bar-room brawler and every third-rate scribbler undertook to select and to settle what the spheres of the Martineaus and the De Staëls of this world were to be. It was not the education man got from books, but the lessons he learned from life and society that profited him most highly. Let them take the unfledged youth who came from college, what was he? As a rule he was a very conceited young prig, but he was a man, and had had seven or eight years tutoring. Yet man though he was, until he had walked up and down the paths of life, until he had received his education in the discipline of the world, in the stimulus of motive, in the hope of gain, in the desire of honour, in the love of reputation, he had got in nine cases out of ten no education at all. "Le monde est le livre des femmes." Of this book they deprived her by denying her the ballot. They gave her nothing but man's little printed primers. They made for her a world of dolls and then complained that she was frivolous. They deprived her of all the stimulus which the good and great of all nations, all societies had enjoyed, the world's honours, its gold and its fame, and then they coolly asked of her: "Why are you not as well disciplined as we are?" Responsibility was perhaps one instrument—one great instrument—of education both moral and intellectual. It hardened the ideas, sharpened the faculties. It unfolded the moral nature. It made the careless prudent and turned recklessness into sobriety. Let them look at the frivolous pleasure-seeking young society wife suddenly left a widow, with the care of her children's education and entrance into life thrown upon her. How prudent and sagacious she became, how fruitful in resources and comprehensive in her views. How much intellect and character she surprised her old friends with. Or let them take the statesman, bold, aggressive, reckless in opposition. How prudent, how thoughtful, how courteous to political opponents, how often timid he became when he took office. He realised that a nation's welfare might hang upon his decision. Woman could never study those great questions which stirred interest most deeply in the human mind until she studied them under the mingled stimulus and check of that responsibility; and until her ability was gauged by such questions, studied under such influences, they would never know what it really was. Some hon. Members would deny statesmanship to woman. What! Deny statesmanship to the sisters of Victoria and Elizabeth of England, of Isabella of Spain, or Maria Theresa of Austria? Ah, no. They could not read history, unless they read it upside down, without admitting that woman, cramped, fettered, degraded as she had been, had yet sometimes, with one ray of instinctive genius, done more to settle great questions than the more cumbrous intellect of the other sex had ever done. He would say to those who opposed this Bill, "Go to Turkey and shut up your women. Go back to those Oriental phases of civilization which would never allow a woman's eyes to brighten man's pathway, which do not belong to the century of the ballot-box, and which do not belong in any way to Great Britain." The first mention they had of Saxon blood in history was that line of Tacitus, which read, "In all grave matters they consult their women." He was convinced that years hence, when robust common sense had swept away these Oriental superstitions, and had trodden under foot squeamish scholarship and fastidious fashion, some second Tacitus from the valley of the Thames would arise and would answer him of the Seven Hills, "In all grave matters we consult our women."

*SIR. W. BRAMPTON GURDON (Norfolk, N.) said he was prepared to admit that any claim women might have for suffrage must not suffer by any such scenes as had lately occurred within the precincts of the House. He had the greatest respect for those women who were constitutionally agitating for the suffrage, but he could not forget that during the ten years the Conservatives were in office this section was perfectly silent, and that during the by-elections which had recently occurred they did not seem to have been in the least anxious to get in those who were in favour of woman suffrage. The more savage the nation the more man was considered to be superior to woman. In the most savage he made her do all the hard work; but the more civilised man became the more he elevated woman, until he himself did all the hard work, and left her only the lighter duties and pleasures of life. We did not ask women to sweep chimneys, and he himself would be very sorry to ask a woman to clean his boots or to perform any other of the hard and most unpleasant duties of life. He had heard of women going amongst electors canvassing for votes. In his constituency such a proceeding was prohibited at least on his side. His constituency resented canvassing, and the best thing a man could do who wanted to get him out would be to disguise himself as a Liberal and go round the constituency canvassing in his (Sir W. Brampton Gurdon's) favour. There were some Members, he frankly admitted, who went canvassing, and some who were even so degrading as to send out their wives and daughters. He did not like to say anything hard about the matter, but to men who went out canvassing he would like to give twenty-five lashes, and for those who sent out their womenfolk he would make it fifty. He had noticed one very curious thing in regard to the question, and that was that during the passage of Lord Ritchie's Factory Act the Liberals endeavoured to get greater advantages for the working men, and they constantly secured a great many votes from Conservative Members opposite. Directly, however, it was tried to get any advantages for the working women they never got a single Conservative vote. He objected to this Bill particularly because it would not enfranchise women as a whole. It would not give the vote to the women who really wanted it, but only to a section of the wealthy. No one could wish women to take any part in the rough and tumble of political life, but he thought something might be done as was done in Italy, where a woman with property was allowed to nominate a man to vote. She might nominate her son, for instance, and thus the property would be represented. He submitted that men ought to safeguard women from all hardships and hard work of life. He held them in such reverence that he never believed a man was so good as a really good woman, although at the same time he was quite prepared to admit that there was never a man so bad as a really bad woman. He quite agreed that we should consult our women on all the great issues of life, but like the officers of the Army who were there to command and not to shoot women should be the brains and not the working hands of administration. It was impossible to treat women as we treated men. One of the greatest crimes in this country was to try and intimidate Parliament during a session. It was the only crime for which the Government were entitled to call out the military and shoot without hesitation; but what would have been said if such action had been taken with regard to the late disorders? Everybody had compassion with the women who complained of their treatment in prison, but if the complaints had been made by men they would simply have laughed at them. Many men voluntarily endured hardships in travelling and mountaineering, and other much greater hardships. That showed that they could not treat women as they would treat men. What they looked to do was to keep women on a higher level and not to ask them to come grovelling in the mud with them, for their business in that House was to sweep away the dirt and mud of public life. Their object should be to keep women on a higher level, as in every civilised community. He hoped he was an honourable foe; he had always had a horror of obstruction, and if it became a question of the closure he should gladly support it in order to get a straightforward vote on the question,. but his voice must be against his hon, friend.

*Mr. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said he only desired to intervene for a few minutes for the purpose of explaining why he could not give a silent vote on this Bill. He was in favour of women's enfranchisement, and if he had his own way, he would go, as was said, "the whole hog." He was against any proposal which was limited in character, as was the case in this Bill. He had chiefly risen to make reference to one particular part of the Bill which, for the first time in a measure of the kind brought before the House, made it possible for a man and his wife, with a £20 qualification combined, to have two votes, one each. That was a proposition that no Labour Member could support. He believed that such a clause would keep out thousands and even millions of women who were just as much entitled to have a say in the government of the country as any one of those who possessed the qualification set up. He was president of an organisation of 120,000 people, of whom 80,000 were females, including 20,000 married women living with their husbands, and not one of them, so far as he knew, had the property qualification necessary under the Bill as it stood. He could not consistently support such a Bill as that. He would only vote for it because of the proposition it laid down that women were entitled to have a share in the government of the country. They could not say that women who had to take their part in factory and workshop life were to be excluded from having a share in the administration of the very work in which they were engaged. It was said that women employed in the textile industry had been told they must vote for woman suffrage because it would increase their wages. Such a statement was absurd, and whoever made it did not represent the textile leaders. In Lancashire women were on a level with men as regarded wages, and no higher standard could be fixed for a woman. It was absurd to say that any such reason had influenced the women in Lancashire to support the Bill. They claimed the right to a vote as citizens. They might have been told by people who did not understand factory life that their wages would be increased, but no leader of the textile industries had told them anything of the kind. While he would vote for the Bill now, he would very much regret to be called upon to vote against it on the Third Reading if this clause were retained. He supposed, however, that it was really an academic discussion, and that there was no further chance for the Bill. But he was glad that the Bill had been brought forward, so that the Government might regard the question as serious, and he hoped that next time the Prime Minister spoke on the matter he would be able to speak for the Cabinet as well as for himself.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said he would not have intervened in the debate but for the extraordinary statements which had been made that the Bill was promoted by a majority of the women of the country who really desired to become possessed of the Parliamentary franchise. He thought he was justified in describing that as the only occasion on which the subject had been debated in earnest in that House. Hitherto the House had simply played with the question, but now that Members found themselves face to face with the subject they were beginning to reconsider the pledges they hastily gave at the last general election and the course they had hitherto pursued. When the subject was discussed three years ago he spoke and voted against it, and to show what a hollow mockery it then was, some of the Members who voted in favour of the Motion came to him after the division and thanked him for his opposition, and said he had expressed the opinions which they entertained. He asked them how they could thank him when they went into the division lobby in support of the proposal. Well, they replied, what could they do; the women had pestered them and exacted pledges from them and they had been weak enough to yield. He might be told that those men were cowards, but he knew that some of them had shed their blood and faced death on battlefields, but they had not the courage to say "no" to a woman. The hon. Member for St. Pancras had stated that there had been a greater number of petitioners in favour of votes for women than upon any other subject. He did not know where the hon. Member obtained his information, but he would advise him to go to the Petition Office where he would get reliable information of a remarkable character. A Return recently issued to Members showed the number of petitioners in favour of the Bill from 1890 to 1906—sixteen years. In 1890 3,127 people—he said people because they were not all women who signed—petitioned in favour of the Parliamentary franchise. In 1891 there were 3,277; in 1892, 7,313; in 1893, 19,765; in 1894, 4,602; in 1895, 312; in 1896, 1,459; in 1897, 3,399; in 1898, 853; in 1899, 6,157; in 1890, 7; in 1901, 30,178; in 1902, 39,079; in 1903, 13,990; in 1904, 11,946; in 1905, 8,153; in 1906, the date of the Return, 1. The total who petitioned during the sixteen years was 193,618, but even that small body did not represent the actual number of women suffragists as many of them were men, and a number of the women who did so were the same who signed petitions year after year. Yet the women who had been agitating and creating such disturbances posed as the representatives of the women of England. The only parallel for such audacity as they displayed was to be found in the story about the three tailors of Tooley Street.

*MR. DICKINSON, as a matter of personal explanation, pointed out that he had not said that there were more petitioners, but that there were more petitions.

*MR. CREMER said the Return also gave the number of petitions, the total number for the sixteen years being 2,584. According to the last census the number of adult females in the country was 10,520,780, so that deducting the number who signed the petitions between 1890 and 1906 from the total number of females as shown by the census, they had a total of 10,327,162 who had not manifested a desire to obtain the Parliamentary franchise, only a very small proportion of them, in his opinion, caring a fig about it. A gentleman had written him a letter on 21st November from Rochdale, saying that the unscrupulous manner in which the suffragists had attacked him (Mr. Cremer) was characteristic of their whole proceedings. The writer went on to say that one of the ladies actually stated that she had been thrown on the floor and kicked by a policeman till she was black and blue from head to foot. His correspondent added that the signatures to the petitions in Lancashire were got by paying women 8d. an hour for obtaining them; that women were persuaded to sign because they were told that it would raise their wages to the level of the men's; that their unions were no good, as the men had higher wages merely because they had votes. The writer of the letters further stated that the women of Lancashire knew little and cared nothing about the Parliamentary vote. That statement, strangely enough, came from a prominent member of the Independent Labour Party, who expressed himself in strong language, which he would not read, concerning the action of the Leader of the Independent Labour Party in allowing himself to be made a tool of by designing women. It was a very intelligent letter and a spontaneous statement from a gentleman whom he was not personally acquainted with. Upon further examination of the census Returns he found that there were 10,520,780 adult females in the country and 9,848,111 males, so that the excess of females over males was 672,669; and if they calculated that from 300,000 to 400,000 men who were in the Army and Navy or travelling would be unable to vote or were not enfranchised, the number of women voters in excess of men would be upwards of 1,000,000 and at every Parliamentary election they would be able to swamp the male voters whenever they chose to do so, and the bread winners would be in a minority. He respectfully submitted to hon. Members that they would do well, before they voted for this Bill and took a step which they could never retrace, to bear these facts in mind. He was opposed to this Bill as he had always been. The interest evinced in the debate contrasted with the lack of interest displayed when the subject was discussed on previous occasions and proved that Members were becoming aware of the dangerous character of the Bill. He had no hesitation as to the course he should pursue if a division was taken; he would record his vote against the Bill. He regretted that various Amendments on the Paper could not be proposed; but considering that they had only five hours for the discussion of the Bill, which, as the hon. Member for the Cricklade Division rightly said, was a revolution, he thought that the House ought to pause before it took a step which it could never retrace. Among the many reasons he had for opposing the Bill were, that women were already creatures of privilege and he had no wish to increase the power of the privileged classes, and that in the power which mothers possessed to mould the minds of the young and make them good men and women, they were practically omnipotent in shaping the legislation and destinies of the country. It was an old and true saying that—

"The hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world."

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) said he had taken part in a number of discussions on this question, and he would be reluctant to allow the debate to conclude without saying a word or two, not so much upon the merits of the question, as upon this particular Bill. He frankly admitted that the Bill was not founded upon democratic lines, but he could conceive no measure, having regard to the lines on which it was drawn, more calculated to result in adult suffrage than the Bill introduced by his hon. friend. Therefore they need not be in the smallest degree afraid to vote for it on the grounds suggested by hon. Members, and he hoped that all supporters of woman suffrage would abstain from any flank attack, if he might use the expression, upon this measure, for such an attack would be regarded, not as a mere objection to the form of the Bill, but as an excuse for opposing the merits and the principle of the question. The speeches had been simply a *rechauffe* of the arguments they had heard for over fifty years, ever since the subject was first discussed. He had been reading the report of the speeches made in the House upon the introduction of Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867, and upon the introduction of the Reform Bill of 1884. Every argument in detail adduced then against the admission of the working classes to the franchise had been adduced that day against the admission of women. In the first place it was said that there was no demand for it. During the suffrage agitation the then Mr. Lowe, and other speakers, continually taunted Mr. Gladstone and other great protagonists of that measure that there was no demand amongst the working classes for the Reform Bill. As a matter of fact that charge was true, because, quite apart from the justice of the measure, it was practically impossible, except by fictitious means, the expenditure of money, and organising meetings and sending speakers, to get up anything in the shape of a legitimate agitation. It did not matter so much whether they wanted it or not; the real question was whether or not it was good for the State. How had the demand for woman suffrage been created? At first they tried tea-parties and drawing-room meetings, but no notice was taken of them, and they resolved that something else was wanted. Then they held demonstrations outside the House. It should not be forgotten that the leaders of the agitation were women of delicate sensibilities, and they demonstrated in the way they had done to meet political requirements. And for that they were spoken of as being unsexed, mounted police were sent to interfere, and they were said to have injured their cause. If they proceeded by constitutional, legitimate, and ordinary methods it was argued that they showed no desire for the franchise, and when they proceeded otherwise it was urged that they injured their cause. Amongst the textile workers of Lancashire there was a spontaneous feeling in favour of the measure, and it was a feeling which was not the result of any such agitation. It was said that women had no interest in the question. He did not know how his hon. friends could establish the truth of that assertion. He considered that their actual interests were very great. Supposing the allegations made against the textile weavers were true, and that they did believe that they would enhance their wages if they had the franchise—was that a matter of reproach to them? Through not possessing the franchise women did suffer in that respect. He protested against the assertion that women had no interest in the possession of the franchise. It was an argument that could not be supported, and it was as empty as the taunt levelled against agricultural labourers in 1884. They were told that this was not a live question and that it was never before the electorate; but it was argued and discussed both by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and even the Chancellor of the Exchequer so far altered his position as to say that he had an open mind.

MR. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): I never said so.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said that in an interview between the right hon. Gentleman and certain suffragists in Scotland he was reported to have said that he had not closed the doors of salvation against women.

MR. ASQUITH dissented.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said that however that might be, they knew that in recent years the matter had made so much progress that, as a matter of fact, there was scarcely a single constituency at the last election where the candidates on both sides were not challenged to say whether they were for or against woman suffrage. As far as he could gather, at least 400 Members of the House directly pledged themselves in favour of the principle at the last election. He was in favour of woman suffrage, not because he believed that it was going to work like the wave of a magic wand and change their social conditions or advance the particular interests of the Party to which he belonged, but because he believed it would have a great elevating effect upon women. Many great social problems associated with daily life, questions of temperance, of sanitation, and many other matters came home more nearly to the minds of the women of the country than to the men. On a recent occasion in the north an application for a licence was opposed by all the women in the district and supported by the men. In New Zealand there was permanent testimony to the influence of woman suffrage in favour of temperance. To secure the co-operation of women in the work of social reform this step should be taken, and it would conduce to the welfare of the whole community.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said he did not intend to draw any invidious comparisons, or to assert that women were not fit to adorn any sphere of life which they chose to enter. He congratulated the hon. Member for Merionethshire upon his eloquent speech, which he felt sure would sway more votes than any other speech made during the course of the debate, for he had spoken of women in terms with which all would be ready to associate themselves. But there was another point of view. While acknowledging the influence of women in social questions, he denied that such influence would be better or stronger if they took part in the turmoil of Parliamentary elections. Canvassing at a Parliamentary election was not a nice business, and he did not think they wanted women to be occupied in that way. This was a measure which would press very heavily upon the county districts. In his own county, which contained some 8,000 electors, they experienced the greatest difficulty in getting to the poll, and it would be absolutely impossible for women to get there. He asked hon. Members who possessed devoted mothers and virtuous wives whether their influence would have been any greater if it had been exercised in the polling booth or in canvassing. When they got women canvassing, it was an appalling thing. He remembered at a county council election calling upon a woman voter, and upon asking why she had not recorded her vote she said she was ill, and the doctor had told her to go to bed and not get up until the poll was closed. He did not think there was any demand for franchise on the part of women. If there was any such demand then the women would get the franchise. With regard to the comparisons which had been made with other countries, they were entirely misleading, for no European country had ever ventured to plunge into this cauldron of trouble. It had never been adopted by liberty-loving France, nor had Switerland or Denmark ever contemplated any scheme of the sort. Only four small States in the United States had adopted it. The extension of the suffrage to women would be a shifting of the responsibility which the men of a great nation ought to bear, so that by them, as by their cowardly progenitor, the blame might be cast on "the woman thou gavest me." In all matters of legislation the interests of women were already strongly voiced. Were they not already sufficiently heckled at public meetings by women? At the last election they all pledged themselves in favour of various social reforms affecting women. All would be in accord with the Prime Minister as to the influence of women on domestic legislation; but after telling their constituents of the great things to be expected from the present Government, were they now to enter upon a great constitutional change not mentioned in the programme and which might be appalling in its effect? Scotland ruled in the Cabinet, and yet it seemed as if she was to get no legislation. If the Government were to pass such a Bill as this and leave in suspension the magnificent programme of Reform which they had preached but a short time back they would indeed "be far left to themselves," which was about the most unkind thing they could say to them without using bad language. They wanted to be able to go back to their constituencies and show that they had done something for them. Scotsmen were powerful in the Cabinet, and yet it seemed as if Scotland was to get no legislation. They ruled the finances of the country, and yet they could not get anything. Scottish members wanted to be able to return to their constituencies showing some little fish in their baskets. [OPPOSITION cheers.] He did not wonder Members opposite cheered; but he was too old a bird to rise to their fly. There was something wrong somewhere. They were pledged to educational reform, and a variety of other reforms, and he sincerely hoped that before they were sent back to their constituents they would have something to show. Hon. Members who were inclined to support the Bill need not take any comfort to themselves by supposing that it would receive severe criticism in another place. It would be hailed there with approval and passed into law, and the result was very hard to foresee. The action of New Zealand in granting the franchise to women was relied on by the supporters of the Bill. He had lived for many years in that country and could say that not only the conditions there, but the people were entirely different. His hon. friend had described Australia as the most parochial country in the world, although nobody liked to say it. He was very much of the same opinion. It was confined absolutely to its own affairs and protected from outside interference by the British Fleet. The priests and parsons had no power there; in this country they were all powerful. There social interest was as nothing; here it was everything. In such a country the franchise might be extended to boys and girls just left school, and it would not make much difference. The country would go on prospering just as it was doing now. He would vote most cordially against the Second Reading of this Bill. He thought it was a measure not designed for the good of the country, but for the embarrassing of the Government if it could be embarassed. It was inconvenient to everyone, and he sincerely trusted that it would not be passed into law.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) expressed the hope that the vote to be taken that afternoon would be a thoroughly straightforward one, indicating the real opinions of hon. Members. The most astonishing statement he had ever heard during the twenty-four years he had been a Member of the House was one made by the hon. Member for Haggerston that day. He had told the House that after the last division was taken on this subject several Members who voted in favour of the franchise for women came and thanked him sincerely for voicing their opinions against the Resolution and declared that they were afraid to give expression by their votes to their true opinions. If there were any Members in the House of that kind he certainly did not know them. He believed that they must be very few in number, and he was perfectly persuaded that every Member of the House would vote on this question according to his conscientious convictions. He had listened with great amusement to the speech of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland in opposition to the Bill. When he looked for direction in Liberal and democratic principles he did not turn to the hon. Member. He looked, and he believed the mass of the people generally would look, for the true principles of Liberalism and democracy, not to opponents of the Bill on the Ministerial Benches, but to their leader, the Prime Minister; and those who followed the right hon. Gentleman into the Lobby in support of the Bill would be regarded as the true exponents of Liberalism and democracy. It was said that the agitation outside the House had set back the movement for the enfranchisement of women. He was filled with amazement to hear Liberals speaking sneeringly of agitators. What great reform had been carried in this country except by agitation, backed up by violence greater in some instances than the ladies had indulged in? He was not going to enter into the question whether women were as well entitled to the franchise as men. There was no man in the House who could say that it was just or proper that the dregs of the male population should have the right of voting and shaping the affairs of the country, while most highly educated and intellectual women were deprived of all share in the government. What was the fundamental principle of the British Constitution? It was that there should be no taxation without representation. Yet women were taxed and allowed no voice in selecting the country's representatives. He agreed that this Bill was in many respects one which Liberals could not be expected to support enthusiastically, but after all they had not been discussing the merits or the demerits of the particular Bill before the House. It was true that the Bill was before them, but they were not discussing the details of that or any other Bill. The great question they had to decide was whether the women of the country as well as men were entitled to vote, and it was on that principle the division would be taken. His view was that no community of men had the right to deprive of their share in the management of national affairs any section of God's creatures. [Laughter.] Women were endowed, as much as hon. Members who laughed, with intellect by Almighty God. Where would they find any text in Scripture that it was the Divine intention that women should be treated as slaves; and yet they were treated as slaves when they were deprived of the rights of citizenship in the land. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland had referred to Australia. That Colony could give us lessons in many things, and in this matter among others. The extension of the franchise there had given greater power and strength to the masses of the people than in any other country. He would vote with the Prime Minister, and he hoped that every true liberal would take the same course.

*Mr. T. A. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) said there was a real danger that when hon. Members came to vote they would be at cross purposes. Everybody who had spoken in favour of enfranchisement had urged them to vote for some principle that was different from and inconsistent with the principle of the Bill. He had never listened to a more complete *non sequitur* than that contained in the argument of the Prime Minister's speech. The right hon. Gentleman told the House that he was in favour of some great principle for the enfranchisement of women, he told them next that the Bill did not carry out and could not carry out that principle; that he did not approve of the Bill, and that, therefore, he would vote for it. It appeared to him that the great authority of the Prime Minister was likely to mislead a number of his faithful supporters into following an equally illogical course. What he was going to vote upon was the Bill before the House, and not upon any great moral principle with respect to which they might be all agreed. It was idle to say they might affirm the principle and amend the details in Committee. That was not possible with this Bill. Here the details were the principle. This Bill was designed to establish the principle that whatever franchise men had women should in every detail enjoy the same. If therefore they altered any detail it was a different Bill. He would remind the hon. Member for the Clitheroe Division that our sole democratic franchise was the household franchise, and it did not apply to married women. Every married woman who got a vote would have to do so on a property qualification. In order to do so she and her husband would have to live in a house of at least £20 a year value. The meaning of that was that no married woman of the working classes would get a vote, while every married woman of the wealthier classes would get a vote, and wealthy women might get many plural votes. He would rather rely on the votes of married women of the working classes, because they had been brought into more intimate contact with the realities of life than others.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said he had for many years been fighting to give the labouring classes power to take a share in the making of the laws and to have some voice in controlling the affairs of the country. The Bill now before the House would simply give votes to a privileged class, and for that reason he could not support it. In New Zealand and Australia, where it was said female suffrage worked well, it was not the suffrage proposed by the Bill which worked well, but a suffrage conferring the right of voting on the working classes. From an analysis of the 21,000 names signed to a statement which had been sent to Members of the House in favour of female suffrage it appeared that 5,000 were married women. The next class were school teachers. Were they unorganised, and had they no power in the House? Then came people of independent means, and people of various occupations. They were people who were well represented by men in the House of Commons. The names of poor downtrodden women who suffered in laundries and other places from overwork and who were not organised, did not appear in large numbers on that paper. It was signed by people who already had privileges and were asking for more.

Mr. DICKINSON rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

*Mr. REES (Mongtomery Boroughs) said that only one representative of Wales had spoken in the course of the debate. He was afraid that the speech of his eloquent fellow countryman, the Member for Merionethshire, was likely to convey a wrong impression to the House of the opinions of the men and women of Wales. His hon. friend had gone to Germany and had quoted from Tacitus, but his wonder was why his hon. friend had not quoted from the poetry of Wales. The beauty of his fellow countrywomen, while it had inspired his eloquence, had impaired his judgment. He would like to make a quotation himself from a Welsh poet, but he would spare the House the ordeal. [Cries of "Quote."] Well, he would quote, but he would spare the House the vernacular of Wales, which unfortunately it did not understand, but when he listened to his hon. friend he expected him to conclude with the well-known lines: "When I remember the marches of Merioneth, where my head was pillowed on a white arm." If his hon. friend had remembered his native literature he thought he would have been spared from presenting this demand or pressing this Bill. His hon. friend also said "Go to Turkey." He did not know whether his hon. friend like he himself had been there, but if he would go to Turkey or to the East he would hear the wise men there say that "the English are a powerful and mighty race, with a disposition in spite of all to lunacy." That was an opinion widely held throughout the East; and nothing would confirm that opinion like a favourable vote on this Bill, which would in effect and in the end hand over the management of affairs to the women of the country. If this measure was passed there would subsequently come the entry of women into the House itself. No Member would be able to obtain a seat if once ladies were admitted to the House. The other day he suddenly came into the House from another sphere and was unable to secure a seat. He sat accordingly on the floor, and then the Speaker called him by name; and immediately he found himself hauled on to the friendly knees of another hon. friend in order to address the Chair. But supposing on that occasion the unfortunate male had to seek similar refuge on the knees of a lady Member. The privileges of Members would be curtailed in all directions. For instance, he and two other Members had occupied last session the seats from one of which he now addressed the House. A powerful and, in this behalf, unscrupulous nation had raided that particular corner, but he and two friends had successfully resisted the inroads of the Picts and Scots. Had they been Scottish ladies he and his friends, with rage in their hearts, would have had to give way to the lady Members, and to protest the last thing they wanted was their seats.

MR. DICKINSON rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

*MR. REES proceeded with his speech, but on account of interruptions he was almost inaudible in the Press gallery. Referring to the cries of "Order" he said he was perfectly in order, and that what he had to say in regard to this matter would be of considerable benefit to the State, which was threatened with a revolution.

MR. DICKINSON rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

*MR. REES, speaking amid cries of "Divide," protested against this attempt to force a revolution on the country, especially when the supporters of the

Bill were apparently unwilling to give a critic five minutes wherein to address the House, but desired to rush through a Bill of this character after a brief and inadequate discussion on a Friday afternoon, a proceeding against which he protested with all his might.

And, it being Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

POLITICAL PENSIONS BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Friday next.

RADIOTELEGRAPHIC CONVENTION.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Radiotelegraphic Convention, signed at Berlin on the 3rd day of November, 1906, and to report what, from the point of view of national and public interests, would, in their opinion, be the effect of the adhesion or non-adhesion of this country to the Convention."

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked whether the terms of reference would bring within the purview of the Committee the consideration of the contract between the Admiralty and the Marconi Company, and also any other contract between any other Government Department and that company or any other? He moved that the consideration of the motion be adjourned.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea) said he believed the contracts referred to by the hon. Member came within the terms of reference. Having given that assurance, he hoped the hon. Member would not oppose the Motion.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said that on the understanding that these contracts would be included in the terms of reference, he would not press his opposition.

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Radiotelegraphic Convention, signed at Berlin on the 3rd day of November, 1906, and to report what, from the point of view of national and public interests, would, in their opinion, be the effect of the adhesion or non-adhesion of this country to the Convention.

Committee accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Adkins, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Sir John Dickson-Poynder, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Gwynn, Sir William Holland, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Arthur Lee, Mr. Macpherson, Sir Gilbert Parker, and Sir Edward Sassoon.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Four be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at six minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 11th March, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways [H.L.] The same was ordered to lie upon the Table.

Royal Bank of Scotland Bill [H.L.]; General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Limited, Bill [H.L.]. Presented; read 1^{a}; and referred to the Examiners.

Renfrewshire Upper District (Eastwood and Mearns) Water Bill [H.L.]; Glasgow Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Aberdeen Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Electric Supply Corporation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]. Presented, and read 1^{a}.

Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.]. A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

Byrne's Divorce Bill [H.L.]. The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had received by post from the Lord Justice of the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, a Report of the proceedings upon the inquiry before him in the case of Byrne *v.* McDowell. The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Middlesbrough Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The orders made on the 25th and 28th of February last discharged, and Bill committed.

South Lincolnshire Water Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. Order of the Day for the Second Reading read, and discharged. Ordered that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Burnham (Somerset) Pier Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Corporation Tramways Bill Bill [H.L.]; Tyne Improvement Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Headley be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Viscount Iveagh; read and agreed to.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES: ANNUAL.

No. 519. East Africa Protectorate (Report for 1905–1906).

BOARD OF EDUCATION (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, ETC.)

Report for the year 1905 on the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Colleges of Science and of Art, the Geological Survey and Museum, and on the work of the Solar Physics Committee.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Code of Regulations for Day Schools, 1907; with Appendices.

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 9th March, 1907, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant.

TRADE REPORTS, ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 3747. Abyssinia.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

Annual report on the state of the finances of the University of Glasgow under the provisions of Section 30 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, for the year 1905–1906.

SUPERANNUATION (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.)

Treasury Minute, dated 5th March, 1907, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the offices of salaried official receiver in bankruptcy and inspector of official

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by a Member.

receivers, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required.

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANK AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Account of the gross amount of all sums received and paid by the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt on account of banks for saving and friendly societies in Great Britain and Ireland, from their commencement at 6th August, 1817, to 20th November, 1906, inclusive.

Account of the several transactions which have taken place during the year ended 20th November, 1906, in the investment of all moneys which came into the hands of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt for savings banks and friendly societies.

Statement showing the aggregate amount of the liabilities of the Government to the trustees of savings banks and friendly societies respectively on 20th November, 1906, etc.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Report from the Committee of Selection, that the following Lords be proposed to the House as the panel of Lords to act as Commissioners under the Act, viz. :—

V. Falkland.
L. Templemore.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly.

NEW BILLS.

RULE COMMITTEE BILL [H.L.] (No. 11).

A Bill to amend the Judicature Acts, 1873 to 1894, with respect to the persons in whom the power of making rules of Court under those Acts is vested.

MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.] (No. 12).

A Bill to amend the Matrimonial Causes Acts, 1857 to 1866, by extending the powers of the Court in relation to maintenance and alimony, and leave to intervene, and to amend the Evidence Further Amendment Act, 1869; and

PRIZE COURTS BILL [H.L.] (No. 13).

A Bill for amending the law relating to the administration of oaths for the purpose of proceeding in prize Courts,

Were presented by the LORD CHANCELLOR; read 1ª; and to be printed.

SUNDAY TRADING.

***LORD AVEBURY**: My Lords, I rise to move "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to legislate in accordance with the unanimous Reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906."

Let me, in the first place, say that this is not intended as any censure on His Majesty's Government. I had, indeed, hoped that they would have brought in a Bill in accordance with the recommendations in the unanimous Reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906. Still they might fairly say that, with all the other subjects which they have before them, they wished to take more time for consideration of details. Our object is to urge them on, and to encourage them by showing, as we hope we shall, that in dealing with the question they will have your Lordships' support.

There is, perhaps, no subject on which shopkeepers are more thoroughly agreed. The late Committee proposed certain alterations to which they would, I believe, assent; but the Bill, as I introduced it in 1905, is that of the shopkeepers themselves, and is earnestly desired by the shop assistants. The Committee published in their Blue-book (p. 251) a list of over 300 Shopkeepers' Associations by which the Bill is supported, and since then some fifty more have expresssed their approval. On the other hand, there are only two or three who oppose it. I dwell on this because Sunday closing has roused some opposition in

France. It seems to have been passed rather hastily. In our case, however, every clause, every line, of our Bill has been examined by the Shopkeepers' Associations, and approved by them. No doubt there are some exceptional trades. Refreshment houses must, it is thought, be excluded. Tobacconists, also, are in a special position, as the publichouses sell tobacco. They would, many of them, wish for six days licences. Hairdressers, we thought at first, might wish to be open on Sunday mornings, but the Hairdressers' Associations all over the country are keenly in favour of Sunday closing.

Our Bill was read a second time in 1905 without a division, and referred to a Select Committee by which it was unanimously approved. When it came back to the House no notice of opposition was given, no Amendment was put down, but on a snap division it was thrown out by a small majority. My noble friend, Lord Lansdowne, thought there were some points on which further information was desirable; and, under these circumstances, last year I proposed a Resolution which was unanimously agreed to, and a Joint Committee of both Houses was appointed. That Committee held a long inquiry. The shopkeepers reiterated their strong desire to see their Bill passed into law. The Committee, or at least the majority, differed on some minor points of detail and procedure from that of the previous year, but on all the main issues they were agreed, and their Report also was unanimous. They said that they—

> "concurred generally with the Report of the Committee of 1905."

They were satisfied of the great importance of maintaining the Sunday as a day of rest, not only on religious and moral grounds, but also as necessary to the preservation of the health and strength of the community. Almost all the witnesses who appeared before the Committee—even those who, on various grounds, objected to the proposed legislation—were agreed on the necessity for maintaining one day's rest in seven. Though the Committee had no doubt as to the importance of the Sunday rest from the point of view of health, they thought it well to consult the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Richard Douglas Powell, who was good enough to come and express his opinion, which, he said, was that of the whole medical profession, that—

> "there cannot be the least doubt of the importance of one clear day's rest in seven."

They reported that they had heard all the Shopkeepers' Associations which wished to give evidence, and, with one exception, they all supported the Bill of 1905. Moreover, they went on to say—

> "The Bill of 1905, as the Committee of the House of Lords last year pointed out in their Report, is supported by a large number of the principal Trade Councils and Trade Unions, by the Corporations of Belfast, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesborough and Swansea, by the Executive Council of the Urban District Council Association, representing 490 urban districts. The Corporations of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Dundee, Aberdeen, and over fifty other Scottish cities and burghs also support Lord Avebury's Bill, whilst preferring that introduced by Mr. Cameron Corbett. The Committee are satisfied that Sunday shopping has increased, and are disposed to concur with most of the witnesses that this increase is likely to continue unless some steps are taken to prevent it. The present state of the law is unsatisfactory. It has been suggested that the best way of dealing with the evil of Sunday trading would be to limit the hours of labour of shop assistants. The shop assistants are naturally anxious for their Sunday rest. Parliament has intervened in the case of factories and workshops, and the shop assistants claim that their health and happiness equally deserve the attention of Parliament. This view was strongly urged on the Committee by the two principal Associations of Shop Assistants—viz., the Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants and the National Society of Grocers Assistants. This, however, would not benefit the small shopkeeper. At present many of those who open on Sunday do so very reluctantly. If one shopkeeper opens, those in the same way of business in the same neighbourhood must open also, or they will see their business and their customers leaving them and going to their rivals."

The Committee also expressed the opinion that the greater part of the opposition was based on a misapprehension, and added—

> "Under the exemptions provided in the Sunday Closing (Shops) Bill of 1905, which the Committee have in the main adopted, they consider that no serious inconvenience could be caused."

I had suggested, under these circumstances, that we should concur with the Committee of 1905 in supporting the Bill of 1905. My noble friend Lord Beauchamp, however, demurred to this on technical grounds, and moved the final clause of the Report as follows—

> "The Committee do not consider that the words of any particular Bill come within their terms of reference, but they recommend strongly that legislation, subject to such modifications in the existing law as may be necessary, should be initiated in general accordance with the increasing feeling against Sunday trading in this country."

To this I gladly assented. It shows that my noble friend who ably represented the Government on the Committee was convinced that legislation was urgently required, and I hope, therefore, that we shall have the support of His Majesty's Government for the Resolution.

My Lords, I do not dwell on the religious aspect of the question. I should not presume to do so in the presence of his Grace the Primate and other right rev. Prelates. Nor will I again urge its great importance from the point of view of health, because your Lordships have allowed me to lay these considerations before you on two previous occasions. But I content myself with urging this Resolution on your favourable consideration as representing two Parliamentary Committees and as the mouthpiece of 350 tradesmens' associations, who believe that such a measure is urgently required, and that it would greatly add to their health and strength, and to the happiness of their own lives and those of their assistants.

Moved, "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to legislate in accordance with the unanimous Reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

*LORD ZOUCHE OF HARYNGWORTH: My Lords, this question is no doubt one of very great difficulty from whichever side it is approached. There is, as the noble Lord has pointed out, a strong feeling on the part of shopkeepers, of various trade associations and trade unions, and of the working classes generally, that Sunday labour should as far as possible be curtailed, and that the working men of the country should not be deprived of one day's rest in seven, and that, if possible, that day should be Sunday. Speaking generally, I think your Lordships will be inclined to sympathise with the view that has just been expressed by Lord Avebury as to Sunday trading. It is impossible, however, not to see that, unless great care is taken, hardships may be inflicted upon very poor and deserving members of the community with whom it is already a matter of great difficulty to make a sufficient amount of money for their daily bread. Therefore, while, on the one hand, we should endeavour to do as much as possible to afford at least one day's rest in the week to the general body of workers, we should not, on the other hand, fall into the error of acting hardly towards these poor traders.

The subject can be looked at from three points of view—(1) the hygienic side, (2) the trading side, and (3) the religious side. The presence of a large number of Jews in the East End of London and in our large towns adds a great complication to the treatment of the question. As your Lordships are aware, the Jews are mostly a religious people and faithfully observe their Sabbath, as they call it, which takes place on Saturday and not on Sunday; and in a great many instances, if not the majority, they do cease work, however valuable it may be to them, on their Sabbath. Therefore they object very strongly to being obliged to close their business on Sunday, because in that case they would have to close on two days a week instead of one. The subject is further complicated by the fact that the Jewish Sabbath instead of including the whole day usually ends at sunset on the Saturday, which may be taken as 6 p.m. After that hour their shops may be opened and they pursue their trade as usual, so that in any attempted legislation these very intricate points should be taken into consideration to avoid any show of injustice one way or the other.

By the kindness of my noble friend Lord Onslow, I have been furnished with a valuable contribution to our knowledge of this subject from Mr. Rupert Guinness, who has inquired as to the feelings of the people in the district of

London called Haggerston. I will read to your Lordships what he says—

> "I have discovered that the opinion in Haggerston among shopkeepers, street hawkers, costermongers, etc., as regards Sunday trading is that they would be quite willing to accept the principle of no trading on Sunday provided it were applied to the Jews; but if the Jews were to be allowed to trade on Saturday after 6 o'clock when the greatest business is to be done and also on Sunday when Christians would not be able to compete with them, a great injustice would exist. They consider that in a Christian country there should be one law for Jew and Christian."

Mention has been made of the strong feeling of labour unions, of shopkeepers in general, and, it may be said, of the vast majority of the working-classes, who seem to be favourably inclined towards some legislation on the subject. We have also the assistance of the valuable Report made by the Joint Committee who sat last year. It would seem, speaking generally, that it would be for the benefit of the whole community that Sunday labour should be discouraged, and, as far as possible, discontinued. But certain exceptions, no doubt, should be made, especially in regard to the provision of the necessaries of life and those articles which may be classed as half way between necessaries and luxuries, such as tobacco, sweetmeats, and so forth. With regard to the religious side of the question, I do not think I am competent to say much, although I feel very strongly about it. I have no doubt the most rev. Primate will address your Lordships on that aspect of the subject. The working people of this country regard Sunday in the light of a great Charter, the sanctity of which should be preserved. I venture, with very great deference, to support the Motion which has been moved by the noble Lord, and to express the hope that this very important subject will very soon receive the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

*THE LORD BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD: My Lords, I rise to support the noble Lord's Motion as one who had the privilege of acting on the Committee appointed by your Lordships to look into this question, and also as one who has had some experience in past days of the habits of the very poor, which is one of the important considerations that must always surround this question. The noble Lord who has just sat down referred to the case of possible hardship to the small trader. I am certain that all who sat on the Committee must have felt that no more stringent application of the law regarding Sunday observance could possibly take place without some case of hardship arising. But there is a great deal of misapprehension with regard to the hardship which is supposed to fall on the small trader. In a very large number of the cases of those small traders whose shops are at present open throughout Sunday the kind of goods sold are those which would undoubtedly fall under a schedule of exemption in almost any Act which could possibly be passed on the subject, looking to the requirements of modern life. In support of this I might say that the Committee took special care to call representatives of the small traders in order that every opportunity might be given for their case to be fully set forth. Very important statements and statistics were laid before the Committee; and what did they amount to? The representative of the Small Traders' Association, which has been specially called into creation in order to resist the imposition of any further restriction on Sunday trading, came before us and stated that he represented some 8,000 traders, of whom more than half carried on their trade in the Metropolis. Of these 8,000 he admitted that 50 per cent represented sweet shops, 25 per cent. shops that sold sweets and tobacco, or sweets and newspapers, 10 per cent. small general traders, and 15 per cent. fruiterers and the like. Therefore, it is not too much to say that in all probability 75 per cent. of the small traders who would be affected would fall under a schedule of exemptions in almost any Act that could be passed dealing with the subject. While I sympathise very strongly with these poor people, I think it would be unfair to press too hardly the case of the small trader, looking to the fact that he would, to a great extent, fall under a schedule of exemptions. One of the witnesses before the Committee was the Mayor of Birkenhead, who stated that out of 2,600 shops in his borough, on a particular Sunday, 609 were found to be open. Twelve months after that the number open had increased to 683. This is one of the many evidences of the undoubted increase in Sunday trading at the present time. Of those 683 shops, 139 were milk shops, 102 shops of general small dealers, 93 sweet shops, and 104 tobacco shops. Therefore, just half the number of shops said to be open on Sunday at Birkenhead would naturally fall under a schedule of exemptions. I think it is true, therefore, to say, that when the case of the small trader is pleaded against any further restrictions upon Sunday trading, we must qualify it by undoubted facts of this kind.

Then, if I may, I would like to say a word based on what has passed under my own notice. Most of us who speak from this bench have had peculiar opportunities of entering closely into the habits of the poorest of the people, and I cannot help thinking that this matter is one which at bottom really turns upon whether or not we can wisely regulate, from time to time, the habits of our poorer classes. The President of the Local Government Board, the Right Hon. John Burns, was quoted as saying that gentle pressure ought to be put upon the working classes in this matter. Surely if there is one thing which Parliament is not only competent but even called upon to do, it is wisely and gently to regulate those habits into which large masses of our people may fall, by which, without intending it, they may either impair the high standard of reverence which belongs to this country, or be, in their several localities, a nuisance to their neighbours. This question is largely a question of the habits of the people. There can be no doubt that a large amount of unnecessary trading is carried on on Sunday. It has become the habit, in certain localities, for the people to do their shopping on the Lord's Day, and they have fallen into the habit simply because it has been allowed; and the reason it has been allowed is that the legislation on the subject is so antiquated, and the fines imposed so small, that it is impossible to put an effectual stop to it. This Sunday trading threatens to do infinite harm to the social and religious life of many of our people in our largest cities. Take Whitechapel. I was in Petticoat Lane only yesterday, and had a look round among the hawkers and shopkeepers. In the few streets through which I had to pass I saw not only bread, meat, poultry, fish, oysters, vegetables, eggs and other perishable things which might reasonably be supposed to meet the actual needs of people living in that locality, but also crockery, hardware, new and second-hand clothes, bales of cloth, nails, machinery, bicycles, clocks and watches, as well as dogs, hens, birds, and pets of all kinds. This very heterogeneous market had naturally attracted round it persons who came with various kinds of amusements. I will not say there were many of these, but they undoubtedly were there. I am told that in this neighbourhood, owing to strenuous efforts on the part of the local authority, the character of these markets has been improved to a great extent, and much of the gambling and betting which used to take place has been put down. At the same time it would have been possible, so far as I could see yesterday, not only to buy the usual little articles sold by cheap jacks, but also to have your weight taken and a shy at a cocoanut. There were also other accompaniments more of the nature of a fair. People were moving about the streets very thickly, and were content, at any rate in the early part of the morning, to be amused. It seems to be the habit to spend Sunday morning in this way. The crowds, good natured and good tempered, move up and down in order to be amused by the auctioneers, who naturally make them the butt of their observations. It is a matter of habit. This is just as much the thing to do in some of these localities as it is at the seaside the thing to do to walk about on the promenade on the Sunday. But the best of the working men and lads who are members of clubs and other Church organisations in the district tell us that it would be no hardship whatever to stop the greater part of this Sunday traffic. I attach the greatest value to this particular evidence, because it comes from those who frequent these fairs and are accustomed to purchase things there. When you ask them they tell you that even the Sunday shave is not a real necessity, and that if it were stopped men would certainly get shaved on Saturday night.

I do not wish to say very much on the religious side of the question—a plea which always receives in this House the great respect, consideration, and sympathy which it should receive. I, for one, have no sympathy with measures of pure restriction. I do not believe that, directly or actively, religion can be promoted by Act of Parliament, but there are certain hindrances to moral and social improvement on the part of our people which Parliament should remove, and I think this great increase in Sunday trading is one of those hindrances. The only possible quiet time for the very poor in our cities is on a Sunday, and to have this taken away through the great increase in Sunday trading is a serious hardship to them.

This is a small piece of social reform which we ask Parliament to take up, but behind it are to be found two great streams of influence—the jealousy of our workers to preserve one day's rest in seven, and the conscience of the religious, thinking people of the country. Unless the question is taken up soon it is one of those increasing evils which will get a great hold upon us and will become more and more difficult to be tackled. I trust, therefore, that your Lordships will favourably receive the Motion which has been placed before you by the noble Lord opposite.

LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU: My Lords, although I agree with the principle of the Resolution and with what has been said by the right rev. Prelate, I think the Resolution as it stands may be misunderstood outside as meaning more than perhaps is advisable at the present moment. There are several kinds of hardships that were not in the minds of the Committees. Take the Port of Southampton, for instance. Everybody knows how irregular ships are in arrival, and that vessels expected on Saturday frequently do not come in till Sunday. This naturally involves a great deal of Sunday labour and great inconvenience to many engaged in shipping who are unable to obtain what they want on the Saturday; and in a place like Southampton the local authority ought to have power to exempt that particular locality. Then there is another kind of trader who does a very large business on Sunday—the small man on the main roads who repairs bicycles and sells petrol and material for repairing tyres for motor cars. These repairing shops have become a great convenience to motorists and cyclists and all people using the highway. I do not know whether the noble Lord has considered the question of exempting them in any legislation to be brought in. Uniformity is desirable if you can get it, but I do not think you should press for too much uniformity in this matter. The right rev. Prelate, if he were motoring from one church to another to deliver one of his eloquent sermons, would, I think, be greatly annoyed if he had to stop on the roadside between two towns and found that he could not get the necessary material to repair a tire or obtain petrol for his engine. There will have to be many exceptions in a Bill of this kind.

Though I do not disagree in the least with the principle contained in the Motion, I feel that something ought to be said on behalf of the small trader, whose existence is always a precarious one, and who is not in a position to defend himself in the same way as the larger trader. The small streets in the East End and in our large towns contain a great number of these shops, run by traders whose only chance of making ends meet is by keeping open when their larger competitors are closed. These traders should not be overlooked, and I would ask Lord Avebury when he introduces his Bill not to overlook the shops which are so essential for the convenience of motorists and cyclists. There are between 250,000 and 300,000 cyclists on the roads on a Sunday, and to deprive them of the facilities they at present enjoy by closing the shops of the traders to whom I have referred would be a great injustice.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: My Lords, the speech we have just heard is a good illustration of the misunderstanding there is with regard to a measure of this kind. The noble Lord who has just sat down asked us to consider the case of ports and of ships coming in late. We took a great deal of evidence on that subject. How, I ask, are the men who work in the docks affected by the closing of shops on Sunday? Their requirements, when a ship comes in late, would be for refreshments, and refreshments are expressly excluded by the recommendations of the Committee. There is no reason why, because a ship comes in late, a docker should have power to buy crockery on a Sunday; and therefore if you exempt a few classes of shops you meet that objection altogether. I venture to say there is no real force in the shipping argument. There is no difficulty whatever in making exemptions which will remove all injustice in that direction.

Then the noble Lord told us that the small trader was able to compete with the large trader because he could remain open when the large trader had closed. I should like to ask whether, speaking generally, the small trader and his customers are not totally different from the large trader and his customers. It is not a question of the smaller trader competing against the larger trader. The real question is whether there is any necessity, in those parts of London and our large cities which are inhabited by the lower classes, for these small traders to keep open on Sunday for the sake of the same customers as use those shops on week days. The evidence we had before the two Committees seems to me to be overwhelmingly in favour of closing these shops. I quite agree that certain exemptions must be made. It is a matter of argument in what particular direction and by what particular machinery those exemptions should be carried out, and in the two Reports in question there will be found suggestions of different kinds for meeting these difficulties.

I admit what Lord Zouche said, that the Jews are a great difficulty. We went very fully into the Jewish question, and had the advantage of a gentleman of that persuasion as a member of the Committee. I think those who were on the Committee will support me when I say that the Jews recognised that we went as far as it was possible for us to go to meet them, and they sympathised with us very much in our desire to secure one day's rest a week, which, of course, is their principle. I will not detain your Lordships by going into the various suggestions which were made by the Committee for meeting this difficulty, but I do wish earnestly to support the appeal made to His Majesty's Government to take this matter up. I feel very strongly what was said by the right rev. Prelate that every day you delay you make the difficulty of dealing with it more serious. Sunday trading is increasing, and the evidence we had was that the shopkeepers who opened on Sunday in many cases were very unwilling to do so but were compelled by competition. Thus Sunday trading goes on spreading.

Take a suburb in which there is no Sunday trading and no wish for Sunday trading. A man goes down to that suburb, sets up a business, and opens his shop on Sunday. All the other traders of the same kind are compelled, they say, to open on Sunday, otherwise the competition is so great that they suffer in consequence. That is spreading more and more the longer dealing with this matter is delayed. I do not think any one can contend that there has not been sufficient inquiry on the subject. We reported unanimously, although we were not unanimous on every detail, that something should be done, and we reported that under the exemptions provided by the Bill introduced by Lord Avebury no serious inconvenience would be caused. That, I think, is a sufficiently full justification for something being done by His Majesty's Government, and I do trust they will give us some encouragement and will tell us that we may expect legislation on the subject.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, the noble Lord who has raised this question again to-day will probably have anticipated the answer I have to give on behalf of His Majesty's Government. It is that His Majesty's Government have already given pledges with regard to so many measures of first-class importance that they are quite unable to introduce a measure of this character, which would certainly cause a great deal of controversy, and take up a large portion of the time of both Houses of Parliament. I think there are noble Lords on the other side of the House who are of opinion that too much legislation is already proposed by His Majesty's Government, and I hope, therefore, that we shall have their support in asking the noble Lord to withdraw the Resolution he has put on the Paper.

I do not think there is any doubt about the fact that most Members of your Lordships' House agree with the general principle that it is desirable, as much as possible, to decrease the amount of trading done on Sundays, but it is very difficult to decide the best way to carry out that principle. There is also some doubt in regard to urgency. Even the Committee which sat last year did not say that there was any immediate necessity for legislation; and if we refer to the figures in regard to Birkenhead, to which reference has been made, it will be seen that there is no great reason to suppose that, even in Birkenhead, any great increase in Sunday trading has taken place. The figures which were given were that in one or two years the number of shops opened on Sundays had increased from 609 to 683. The Mayor of Birkenhead, who gave us that evidence, did not tell us how great a proportion of that increase was due to those shops which would certainly be exempted under the Bill the noble Lord introduced last year, and I think it is very doubtful if they would not be found to be chiefly shops that would be so exempted.

It is clear that there would be a great deal of opposition to the Bill even if some of the misapprehension which already exists could be removed. Lord Zouche referred to the question of Sunday employment, but I do not think he quite understood that if his definition of Sunday employment were to be accepted by your Lordships' House, and incorporated in a Bill, it would be impossible for railway companies or tramway companies to employ their servants, and travel generally would become impossible. The fact is that the moment you come to consider the matter in detail you find it bristles with difficulties. There is an unfortunate tendency on the part of most men who work hard during the week to get up later and later on the Sunday morning, and we see the consequence in the markets to which reference has already been made. If you legalise these markets up to a certain hour you will find that most of the people who go to buy there will go at the last possible moment, and it is not unlikely that you would have people making their purchases even later than they do at present.

The Committee which sat last year sounded no very certain note, after all, with regard to the lines on which legislation should proceed. It is quite true, as the noble Lord and the noble Duke pointed out, that they were technically unanimous in their Report, but it is instructive to read the proceedings of the Committee during the consideration of the Report. I think it would be difficult to find a Report which underwent so much amendment in the course of its consideration. There were constant divisions, and in a certain number of them the votes were equally divided even on very important questions. On the one hand, there is a tendency to strengthen the penalties that already exist under the Act of Charles II., while, on the other hand, there is a tendency to contract the operation of that law. Therefore you have two different tendencies, both of which find a prominent place in the Report.

But perhaps still more important is a tendency which showed itself towards legislation in an entirely different direction, and to insist on the principle of one day's rest in seven. I venture to think that is a very different matter altogether. That is the line on which legislation has lately proceeded in France, and it has, I think, the support of most of the trade unions; and I am sure that if this matter came to be discussed in Parliament the noble Lord would find two hostile camps—one asking for the prevention of Sunday trading and the other insisting on the principle of one day's rest in seven. On page 16 of the Report your Lordships will see that a Motion was submitted by my noble relative Lord Weardale, in which he moved that the principle of one day's rest in seven should be the line on which the recommendation should be made, and though there were four content there were four not-content, and the Resolution was not carried. I mention that because I wish to lay emphasis on the fact that that proposition was a symptom of a considerable change which is taking place in people's minds in regard to this subject. There is a tendency now that legislation should proceed rather upon those lines than upon the lines of the Act of Charles II. or on the lines proposed by the noble Lord opposite.

Then there is the Jewish difficulty. I was particularly interested in the evidence which Lord Zouche brought us from Haggerston of the general opinion in that neighbourhood. The difficulty with regard to the Jews is this, that you will have to legislate rather against bad Jews than against good Jews. There is a large proportion of Jews who do without doubt keep their Sabbath, and it is possible to make out a good case for those persons being allowed to trade on Sunday; but once you allow Jews generally to trade on Sunday it will be very difficult to discriminate between those Jews who had kept their own Sabbath and those who had not. The suggestion of the Chief Rabbi that all Jews should be allowed to trade on Sunday morning, while Christians should not, seems to me to be a very dangerous one, for legislation on those lines could only have the result of making the Jews unpopular.

I would offer one more reason why a little delay would be a good thing. My noble friend no doubt remembers that in the Speech from the Throne there was a promise of legislation in the direction of an amendment of the licensing laws, and Sunday closing will undoubtedly be considered in the course of the debates on that Bill. Reference has been made by the noble Lord to the condition of the question at this moment in Paris, where great discontent has been caused by the operation of the law. I confess I have often wished that there was in this country some institute to which one could refer when social reforms of this kind were asked for, in order to see the way similar laws had worked in other countries. That would be of the greatest value, and if this matter is delayed for the present I hope the noble Lord will be able to provide some information as to whether or not the movement has met with popular favour in France.

No reference has yet been made to the fact that yesterday was set apart by the Bishop of London in order that the question of Sunday observance should be considered in the churches of his diocese. I listened myself to an admirable sermon in the course of the morning on the subject, but I could not help feeling that it did not really get one very much further. I think we are all of us agreed on the principle of this legislation, but it is when we come to the practical application of the principle that we meet with difficulties. Before the Committee of last year was appointed I was full of the courage of ignorance. I believed it to be perfectly possible to frame a Bill which would meet everybody's wishes and avoid all difficulty. But I must now confess, having sat upon the Committee of last year, that the problem is a great deal more difficult and perhaps not quite ripe for solution at the present time; and I cannot help thinking that the lines on which legislation should proceed will become more clear if no hasty step is taken now.

*THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I confess to a good deal of disappointment in listening to the speech which we have just heard. When the noble Earl rose I was glad to think that we were to hear, on the part of the Government, something from one who, as a member of the Committee, had had exceptional opportunity of being conversant with the whole subject.

But as the noble Earl's speech proceeded and he deprecated, not only immediate legislation, but legislation within any period that we can reasonably contemplate, I turned to the Report itself. I notice in the Report of the Committee's proceedings that the noble Earl himself moved the insertion of these words—

> "The Committee do not consider that the words of any particular Bill come within their terms of reference, but they recommend strongly that legislation, subject to such modifications in the existing law as may be necessary, should be initiated in general accordance with the increasing feeling against Sunday trading in this country, and with the following principles"—

the principles being then set out seriatim.

The noble Earl's advocacy apparently convinced his colleagues on the Committee, for the Motion was adopted, and the words form part of the final Report.

I am therefore disappointed and pained to learn that the noble Earl, speaking on behalf of His Majesty's Government, is a different person from the noble Earl the record of whose successful proposal is enshrined in the Blue-book before us.

The noble Earl stated that His Majesty's Government desired that this Resolution should be withdrawn, and the ground he based that on was that no immediate urgency had been proved. I do not find anything about immediate legislation in the Resolution. It says—

> "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to legislate in accordance with the unanimous reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906."

The Resolution is less strong than the proposal moved by Lord Beauchamp himself in the Committee, but it remains one which goes upon the lines of that proposal; and I had hoped that it would have been accepted by His Majesty's Government, especially as the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty told us when this matter was last before the House that the Government felt it to be a subject that deserved their earnest consideration with a view to something being done. In view of the number of years that the subject has been under discussion, the deprecation of haste has an almost humorous aspect.

This question has been twenty years before each House of Parliament in turn, and we who have been moving in the matter to the best of our power are tired of the argument that we must not be hasty. The Select Committee of your Lordships' House and the Joint Committee of both Houses have really put the matter before us in all the fullness with which it is ever likely to be treated. It is surrounded with difficulties whichever way you look at it, but Governments exist for dealing with subjects surrounded with difficulties; and the fact that there are difficulties is no adequate argument for continuing to say it must be further considered, meaning that it is not to be dealt with at all. If ever the subject is to be dealt with legislatively, it ought to be dealt with soon. It is quite indisputable that the evil we are considering is largely on the increase, and if allowed to go on increasing it will very soon become impossible for us effectively to legislate.

There is one point I would ask your Lordships to look into for yourselves in the evidence which was given before the last Committee on the subject. It is that the increase spoken of is not merely or mainly an increase of Sunday trading which may be called urgent or necessary, or of the kind required in order to meet special difficulties of special classes of the community. We are now face to face with an increase of general trading, and if that increase is allowed to advance as it is now advancing we shall find it impossible to grapple with it when another five or six years have passed. The evil is not a passing, an accidental, or a local one, and the feeling and action provoked in different parts of the world provide us with an object lesson. It is in the Colonies where the legislative power of the working classes is strongest that legislation has been most insisted upon. In New Zealand, where for good or for evil women as well as men have the franchise, and where it is certain that the particular needs of the working classes find expression most clearly and emphatically in the Legislature, there has for years past been a law prohibiting Sunday trading.

And if we look at Canada we find a most remarkable state of things at this moment. Some two years ago I had the privilege of staying for a few days in Toronto, and one of the many subjects I there endeavoured to look into was this particular subject. I had the advantage of conferring with the municipal authorities—men whose knowledge as well as whose capacity impressed me to an extraordinary degree, and I was surprised to find how keenly they felt that it was impossible that even their stringent law on Sunday observance could be allowed to remain unstrengthened if the wishes of the working class population of their great city were to have proper effect given to them. I do not know whether your Lordships have all seen it, but I hold in my hand the Act passed by the Dominion Parliament last year, an Act which came into effect ten days ago. The terms of that legislation are such as would indeed startle the Houses of Parliament in England if it were suggested that we should pass a Bill in that form. The prohibition alike upon trading and work goes so far, and is so thorough in its character, that no one, I think, would suggest that we should attempt to introduce legislation of so drastic a sort in England; but the fact that that is being done in Canada, and that it has for long years been done in New Zealand, and in parts of Australia, is, I think, a very strong argument when we hear it said that this is a passing matter, and that the difficulties are local or temporary, or that the agitation is the work of a few faddists. I am not arguing that it is our duty to follow the example of the Colonies in matters of legislation. That is not my opinion at all. I am quoting the fact of their legislation as evidence of the strength of the feeling which exists, almost throughout the world, upon this question. If any one will study with care what has happened in France he will see that the difficulties that have arisen there have been experienced on precisely those points on which it had been anticipated that difficulty would arise if care was not taken in examining them beforehand. They are the very points we have had examined before Committees time after time, and they are difficulties against which we should be safeguarded by following the lines laid down by our Parliamentary Committees.

The practical difficulty of dealing with this subject has always been most marked in three directions. There is the difficulty of the small trader; the difficulty of ascertaining what is best for the small consumer as apart from the trader; and the difficulty as regards the Jews. All these difficulties have now been thoroughly investigated. The protection necessary for the consumer has been conclusively determined, and that difficulty ought not to be brought up again. As to the Jews, every one desires to protect those who, while in many cases alien residents among us, may suffer on account of their conscientious convictions as to religious observances. But the Jews are congregated in vast numbers in only a few places, and it is only in those places that this difficulty could assume any formidable proportions. The Committee reported that regulations should be made to give relief to the areas mainly inhabited by Jews. We have, I think, something else to remember when we are dealing with that special difficulty. We rightly welcome with the least possible restriction immigrants who come to us, however poor or from whatever part of the world they come; but I do not think it is going too far to say that people who come to this country as immigrants, who come for their own good, and stay here because they find it to be to their advantage, and who are in very small numbers compared with the population of the country as a whole, ought to be prepared to conform to the general rules laid down in the country of their adoption. If a measure is shown to be for the good of the nation as a whole it can be no fatal objection to it that it will in three or four places, where Jews live, press hardly upon some of them. But to avoid even this pressure the Committee has advised special precautions. If this matter is to be taken in hand with any prospect of success it must be by the Government. It penetrates too far into the ordinary life of the people, and requires too much official knowledge, to allow of its being carried through by private persons. After all the Committees that have set on the subject I venture to think that we have a right to ask that something practical should now at last be done.

*LORD WEARDALE: My Lords, I am sure everybody will acquiesce in the view, which has been so admirably expressed by the most rev. Primate, that this is a question which imperatively demands the consideration of Parliament. I think, however, that what has fallen from my noble relative, on behalf of the Government, can be justified by a few observations, and I hope your Lordships will allow me, as a member of the Committee which sat on the subject last year, to lay some stress upon those points which seem to me to give ample justification for the attitude taken up by His Majesty's Government.

The most rev. Primate has, I observe, with considerable dexterity, eliminated the question of urgency from the Motion. I think he was right in that, because he began his speech by saying it was a subject surrounded with difficulty. Surely, the most rev. Primate knows that a Government which has taken up a large number of subjects surrounded with difficulties can hardly, without ample consideration, take up yet another subject which they know must give rise to a great deal of controversy, and which is not likely to be settled, as some seem to think it may be, in one or two sittings of this House and the House of Commons. I venture to affirm that if the Bill proposed by Lord Avebury were to pass this House and to be sent to another place it would give rise there to almost interminable debate. I will not suggest the particular quarter from which criticism or obstruction might proceed, but it must be obvious to every noble Lord that this is not a subject which could be dealt with quite so easily as is imagined.

There are very great difficulties in dealing with this matter at all now. In the first place, there was considerable difference of opinion on the last Committee, and we were not all agreed as to the means which should be adopted to achieve the end in view. Some of us preferred a general enactment stipulating one day's rest in seven, and leaving to the local authority complete freedom to make arrangements in accordance with local requirements. That was a solution which commended itself to a large number—I believe almost half—of the members of the Committee. Then there was the solution proposed by my noble friend. In this matter you have to consider a great variety of interests. You have to consider the case of the small trader; you have to consider the case of seaside ports, which have special requirements on Sunday; and you have also to consider the very difficult question of the Jews. I contend that all these things require very careful consideration by His Majesty's Government before they take this matter in hand.

I suggest two other reasons why delay is advisable. In the first place, there is the announcement made by the Government that they propose to deal in the present year with the whole question of licensing. We found, in considering this matter of Sunday trading, that there was an immense distinction as between Scotland and England, and there was a great difference of opinion as to how the matter should be dealt with. A large number of representative men who came from Scotland, while agreeing with the object of the noble Lord, did not approve of the particular Bill which he proposed, but preferred another Bill introduced into the other House. While you have Sunday closing of public-houses in Scotland, you have not Sunday closing in England, and therefore the noble Lord's Bill would have had to make such distinctions between the two countries as would make it quite unworkable. If Sunday trading is to be dealt with in the new licensing Bill, as I hope it will be, that introduces an important element into the whole question, and I appeal to your Lordships to support the view taken by my noble relative that it would be most unwise to rush into legislation on the subject during the present session, and that time must be given before action is taken.

I wish to make a short reference to an interesting experience now taking place in the French Republic. While the Committee were sitting last year I obtained a copy of the Act which had been passed by the French Parliament. That Act was practically based upon this one principle, that the Legislature recognised that there should be one day's rest in seven for every worker in the community. That was the principle on which that Act rested. It left to the local authorities power to discriminate so as to avoid, as far as possible, inconvenience to certain trades and interests. But I would ask your Lordships to remember how infinitely greater was the problem of Sunday closing in France as compared with Sunday closing in England. Sunday in France was, until almost recent times, very much like any other day. Most of the shops were open, and people proceeded with their ordinary avocations without much difference. Then suddenly the French Legislature, who were forced to take that step by the demand of the workers, passed a general measure enacting one day's rest in seven; and almost in the twinkling of an eye you see the Sabbath better observed in many parts of France than in Great Britain. The exemptions do not in any way detract from the admirable observance of the Sabbath in France to-day. That law has been carried into effect without very grave inconvenience, and it at least proves that a law based on that principle can be just as effective as a law based on what I think I may call the Sabbatarian principle, which, while we all respect it, is not, I think, the right principle on which legislation should be initiated. I hope your Lordships will pause before taking any further action with regard to this subject. I say this with all respect to Lord Avebury, whose services in this matter I should be the very first to acknowledge, and I hope he will agree with me that it is a matter in which action taken without further consideration and without the prospect of being able to carry a Bill in the present session of Parliament ought to be deplored by all those who wish to see some form of legislation carried on the subject.

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, with one observation that fell from the noble Lord who has just sat down I am able entirely to agree. I concur in what he said as to the admiration which we all feel for the manner in which my noble friend Lord Avebury has treated this subject. We admire not only his perseverance, but the moderation and the considerate tone in which he has handled a difficult and intricate matter, and I do not think there can be much surprise in this House that he should feel that the time has come when his indefatigable efforts might well achieve some practical result.

My noble friend comes to us to-night fortified by a very weighty backing of public opinion. No less than 343 tradesmen's associations support the principle he has laid down; no less than 198 working men's associations give him their support, and he is able to appeal to the Reports of no less than four Parliamentary Committees. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that he should desire to press His Majesty's Government not to lay this question on one side. If up to the present he has made but little progress in dealing with it, I do not think that can be charged to any indifference on our part or any reluctance to see what I believe to be a great evil redressed. But I have always been one of those who felt that the subject was one of the most complex and difficult with which Parliament could deal, and I have always believed that there was a risk that by precipitate and inconsiderate dealing with it we might set public opinion, which we should like to carry with us, against us; we have indeed object-lessons before us in the two cases which have been referred to this evening—the attempts which have been made in the French Republic and in Canada to deal with this question.

In France I believe it is the case that the subject was dealt with under pressure somewhat hastily, and the result is that at this moment there is a widespread agitation against the Act now in force there. I shall be corrected if I am wrong, but I am almost sure that I saw the other day that, in Canada, the province of Quebec had already contracted itself out of the Dominion Act to which the most rev. Primate referred. I have always felt that we could not proceed too cautiously, and it was for that reason that, I am afraid rather to my noble friend's disappointment when this matter came up in 1905, I ventured to dissuade the House from attempting to legislate at that time, and suggested not only that it was necessary for us to have the Report of the Committee which had dealt with my noble friend's Bill, but that we required further information and an investigation of the whole case not limited to the four corners of that Bill. I was very glad when a similar view was expressed in this House last year by my noble friend Lord Tweedmouth, and when, with the full concurrence of everybody, a Select Committee was appointed which was seized of the whole subject.

We have now got the Report of that Committee, and I think my noble friend has a right to appeal to it as going very far indeed to justify the arguments he has more than once brought forward. That Committee may, of course, not have been unanimous upon the points of detail with which this question bristles, but upon the broad main lines it was unanimous. What I find in the Committee is an unanimous recommendation in favour of one day's rest in seven—a recommendation based not only upon religious and moral grounds, but supported by hygienic evidence of the most convincing description. That is the first principle. The second matter upon which they were unanimous is that the evil of Sunday trading is steadily increasing, and I think there can be no doubt as to that. My noble friend the Duke of Northumberland showed by a very convincing statement, that this practice of Sunday trading tends automatically to increase, because wherever it spreads it tends to spread further owing to the competition which is set up between the man who can trade on Sunday and the man who cannot. Then, my Lords, the Committee were unanimous as to the utter inadequacy of the present law. That is the third point. Fourthly and lastly, they were unanimous as to the possibility of doing something to mitigate this evil.

My noble friend is able, therefore, to appeal with great force to the Report of the Committee; but it is, of course, true that this is a case in which nothing can be done without the co-operation of His Majesty's Government. It is not for this House, it is not for the Committee, to deal with the details of administration. That is a matter which can only be done adequately by the responsible Government of the day. Now, my Lords, we have had this evening a statement of the way in which the Government of the day regards this question, and I must say I share the disappointment expressed by the most rev. Primate at the manner in which the noble Earl who spoke on behalf of the Government dealt with the case. He presented us with an official dilatory plea of which I am inclined to say that it was artistic but not convincing. He told us that legislation upon the lines of the Report of this Committee could not fail to create some hardship. Of course, we must all be aware of that. The difficulty is inherent. You cannot have any legislation which will not create some hardship; but surely the case is one in which we must have regard, not to the inconvenience that may be occasioned to a few people, but to the great moral and material gain which my noble friend says, I think with truth, would accrue to the whole population of the country by a change in the law. And, of course, the noble Earl's argument, if it be accepted as a conclusive argument, is really fatal to the idea of ever grappling with the difficulties of the question, because there never will be a moment when the representative of the Government of the day will not be able to get up and say, "There are cases of hardship and of inconvenience, and therefore let us put the question on one side."

But the noble Earl had another argument—a familiar friend—the argument that His Majesty's Government could not touch this question because the legislative programme had already assumed such bulky dimensions. That is the second time within the last few days that we have had that argument given to us as a reason for not dealing with a question affecting the social welfare of the working classes, and we shall make a note of that admission. It is a very remarkable admission when we remember the extraordinary readiness with which His Majesty's Ministers are in the habit of appropriating private Members' Bills not included in their own programme when it suits them to do so. I am by no means convinced by that part of the noble Earl's defence.

The noble Earl is perhaps scarcely fair to my noble friend Lord Avebury when he suggests that his Motion is intended to force His Majesty's Government to legislate immediately upon this difficult subject. I admit I do not see how they could undertake to bring in a Bill this year, but we have a right to ask that we shall obtain some assurance from His Majesty's Ministers that this question is not going to be pigeon-holed and entirely neglected. I noted the words which were used by the noble Earl who spoke for the Government. He said there must be some delay for the present, and that the time was not quite ripe for legislation. We are ready to accept that, and I venture to suggest to my noble friend that by a slight alteration in the terms of his Resolution he would make it clear to the House that he is not calling for the immediate introduction of a Bill, but that he does desire that His Majesty's Government should promise that they will give their early consideration to the question in which he is so deeply interested. Would my noble friend who leads the House in the absence of Lord Ripon consider whether His Majesty's Government could accept the Motion of my noble friend, if it were made to run somewhat in this way—

> "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to take the earliest available opportunity of legislating in accordance with the general principles affirmed by the Committees of 1905 and 1906."

That slight change in the language makes it clear that we are ready to give His Majesty's Government a reasonable amount of time in which to examine the question; and it has this additional effect, that it would bind them, not to the exact detail of the Reports of the two Committees, but to the broad general conclusions which are so clearly set forth in the last paragraph of the Report—the paragraph which I understand we owe to the appropriate drafting of the noble

Earl who has spoken on behalf of His Majesty's Government this evening.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I desire to associate myself with what the noble Marquess said at the beginning of his speech by way of compliment to the noble Lord who introduced this Motion. We all of us, I think, owe a tribute, as the noble Marquess said, not merely to the persistent manner in which he has shown his interest in this question, but also to the great moderation and courtesy with which he has always advanced his views both in and out of the House.

The noble Marquess quoted the opinion of my noble friend Lord Tweedmouth, who replied last year on this subject before the appointment of the Committee of which we have heard so much. My noble friend then said that he did not think an Act of Parliament dealing with this subject, unless it was very well thought out, and unless it provided for a great many possible contingencies in a thoroughly just manner, would be of much more service than the Act now in force, and he certainly did not commit himself at that time to anything but a general desire that, if inquiry showed that early legislation was possible, His Majesty's Government should then take the whole matter into consideration. Consequently the real point at issue appears to be this. Do the Report of that Committee and the evidence on which it was founded provide a clear basis on which the Government can and ought to undertake early legislation in this matter?

The most rev. Primate paid my noble friend behind me a very deserved compliment by saying that he was an expert in this matter. I, personally, come to the consideration of the Report and of the evidence with the opposite advantage, bringing so far as I can a fresh mind to their consideration. I am bound to say that, approaching the matter in this way, I have read the Report—and though I have not read the whole of the evidence I think I have a general idea of its bearing—with great disappointment. Not in the least that there was any want of ability or industry in the manner in which the Committee conducted their inquiry. Quite the contrary. But I am bound to say I cannot recall a case where either a Report, or the evidence upon which it was founded, was of so little assistance to a Government who might desire to undertake immediate legislation on the subject. The fact is that the Report, although, as my noble friend behind me said, technically unanimous, really avoids giving decisive opinions on anything except the most general propositions such as those quoted by the noble Marquess who has just sat down.

Now, upon general propositions we are all agreed, but, if you are going to legislate, everything depends upon the details you propose to include in your measure. Take, for instance, the one question of compulsory Sunday closing as against closing on one day of the week; After my experience of last autumn in connection with another measure, I see endless possibilities of discussion on that question alone, and I should not be surprised if any measure which might be brought in were wrecked on that single issue. That is one point.

Then, again, on the matter of exemptions. People talk very lightly of exemptions, and how easy and pleasant it would be for the small consumer owing to the exemptions. But what exemptions? The whole question as to whether it is worth while to undertake this legislation at all depends upon what you are prepared to exempt and what shops you are going compulsorily to close. For instance, the tendency is more and more to sell things at mixed shops—places at which a wide variety of goods can be procured. Everbody agrees that chemists ought to be open on Sunday, but the tendency is for chemists to sell a large variety of goods other than medicines and drugs, and if you are going to say to the small shops that they may sell one set of articles and not another you introduce complications which add greatly to the difficulties of enforcing the law.

Then there is the question of the Jews, which the most rev. Primate faced in a spirit which I am sure we all admired. I find it difficult to extract from the Report or the evidence any distinct notion as to how that serious difficulty is to be dealt with. Are you prepared to say that all Jews who are good Jews are to be limited to five days a week trading;

whereas the bad Jew may trade six? That seems to me to place an unpleasant premium upon the abandonment of the rules of their faith by that community.

Those are all matters which would give rise to an infinity of discussion in both Houses of Parliament, and, looking at the matter, as the Government are obliged to do, from the Parliamentary point of view, we are not able to hold out the prospect of being able very early to deal with the matter. We found our reason for making that statement not merely upon what the noble Marquess twitted us with—the general excuse of Governments that their programme is already full—but also to a great extent upon the really very limited amount of assistance rendered to the Government by the Report of the Committee and the evidence which they collected.

The speech, for instance, of Lord Montagu was in itself evidence of what sharp discrepancies of opinion may exist among those who are, on general grounds, equally desirous to secure this reform. Consequently I am afraid we cannot accept even the words suggested by the noble Marquess opposite as an Amendment to Lord Avebury's Motion. I need hardly say that we do not propose to divide the House against the Motion, even as it stands, but I should not like to be taken as making any kind of pledge or promise to deal with the subject either this year or next year or any given year; and, therefore, though, as I say, we shall not divide the House, we cannot accept the Motion even if amended as suggested.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, I am very grateful to the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition, and to the noble Earl who has just sat down, for the kindly way in which they have alluded to me personally. I commenced my observations by saying that I did not wish to make any complaint of His Majesty's Government; neither do I wish to rush this question. I admit it is one that requires careful consideration.

I must confess I think the noble Earl the Lord President of the Council has greatly minimised the agreement of the Committee and magnified the difficulties of the question. No doubt there were differences of opinion in the Committee as to the best mode of procedure; but, as regards the object to be aimed at and the main way of securing it, the Committee were agreed. It was felt that the present fines should be made really effective. The case of Scotland has been referred to. It is true that the case there is different from that in England, but the whole of the shopkeeping community of Scotland joined with the shopkeepers of England in desiring to see the Bill of 1905 carried. The Municipalities also stated that they all supported the Bill of 1905, though they rather preferred the mode of dealing with the subject proposed by Mr. Cameron Corbett.

With regard to the question of hardship, it must be remembered that those who complain are those who are breaking the law. The real hardship is to those who conform to the law and who see their buiness taken away by traders who are breaking it. Then something has been said about the large associations and the small shopkeepers, but the large associations consist of mainly small shopkeepers. The small traders have been the backbone of this movement and are most anxious that something should be done. I listened to the speech of Lord Beauchamp with both regret and surprise. He said he went on to the Committee with the courage of ignorance but that was dissipated by the evidence brought before him. But when his courage of ignorance had been dissipated by the careful consideration of the evidence, he himself proposed this as a general conclusion—

> "The Committee do not consider that the words of any particular Bill come within their terms of reference, but they recommend strongly that legislation, subject to such modifications in the existing law as may be necessary, should be initiated in general accordance with the increasing feeling against Sunday trading in the country."

That is all we ask him to do by this Resolution. There is no mention whatever of the present session. I should have been glad to have accepted the suggested Amendment of my noble friend the Leader of the Opposition if the Government had seen their way to agree to it.

We have heard a great deal about exemptions. There must be some exemptions. Both Committees agreed with the exemptions suggested by the shopkeepers themselves, and there is no substantial difference as regards that point. Even with these exemptions the Bill would apply to many great trades, and if we could get these businesses closed on Sunday an immense amount of good would be done. I regret that His Majesty's Government cannot accept the Motion, but I must press it, if necessary, to a division, because I have the support of the whole of the shopkeeping community, and I am anxious that they should feel that I have done what little I could to carry a Resolution which is in accordance with their very strong and keen desire. The shopkeepers believe that if such a Bill were passed it would be of great advantage to the shopkeeping community, and particularly to shop assistants, who now work such long hours, and would at the same time inflict no inconvenience on the general public.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): Does the noble Lord move his Motion in the amended form suggested by the noble Marquess?

LORD AVEBURY: Yes.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Then the Motion I have to put is, "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to take the earliest available opportunity of legislating in accordance with the general principles affirmed in the Reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906."

On Question, resolved in the affirmative.

THE NORTH SEA.

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW, who had given notice of the following Question—"To ask whether His Majesty's Government have been invited by any of the other Governments who are taking part in the International Council for the Investigation of the North Sea to continue their participation in that Council after the summer of this year; whether it is their intention to do so, and if so, under what conditions"—said: My Lords, the Question of which I have given notice has been on the Paper of your Lordships' House for some time, and I am sorry I had not an opportunity of putting it earlier, but I postponed it in consequence of the regrettable absence, through indisposition, of my noble friend the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, whom we are all glad to see again in his place. Meanwhile, a somewhat similar Question was asked in another place, and the answer returned to it was such that I need not trouble your lordships by going into the matter in detail and stating the reasons why, in my opinion, it is very undesirable that we should go on participating in this investigation—at any rate on the lines on which it has been done during the past five years. Inasmuch as I have been informed that, pending the consideration of the whole question by a Committee, His Majesty's Government have decided to continue their participation, at any rate for one year after the expiration of the five years to which they had committed themselves, I shall not enter into those matters of detail, but shall reserve to myself the right of raising the question at another time after this Committee has reported.

What I do want to know, however, is what is to be the constitution of this Committee, and what is to be the reference to it. A distinguished statesman, I think it was the late Lord Salisbury, once said that a committee usually consisted of three men who had made up their minds on one side, and three who had made up their minds on the other, with an impartial chairman, who drew up a milk-and-water report which satisfied nobody. I hope that will not be the kind of committee which will be appointed in this case. There has undoubtedly been a great amount of quarrelling and bickering on this particular subject. There are three departments interested—first, the Treasury, which holds the purse strings; secondly, the Scottish Office; and, thirdly, the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. I think I may here say that the interests of the two great fishing industries—the line industry and the trawling industry—are by no means identical. The Scottish Office very largely defends the interests of line fishermen, but the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, representing, as it does, the great trawling industry, very often takes a different view. Then the English part of the participation in the International Council has been entrusted to the Marine Biological Association. A memorial has been presented to the Government entreating them to continue to entrust the English share of the investigation to that association. Besides that, there are a number of persons, both in this House and in the other House, particularly in the other House, who are interested in the policy of closing the Moray Firth and other areas of the same kind. I very much hope that none of those persons will be put on this Committee. If we are to arrive at a sound conclusion on the subject the Government ought to appoint a Committee of persons wholly unconnected with the fishing interests, but able to sift the evidence put before them by scientific and official witnesses and to come to an unbiassed report upon it. I earnestly trust that His Majesty's Government will appoint a thoroughly impartial Committee to advise them upon this important question.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, I have to thank my noble friend for his kindness and courtesy in putting off his Question until I was able to be in my place again, and, as it has been asked and answered in another place in the meantime, I will follow my noble friend's example and not say anything on the question itself. As to the composition of the Committee, at the present moment I am unable to give the noble Earl any definite information, but I think I can make his mind easy on one point by assuring him that the Committee will not be formed in the way referred to by the late Lord Salisbury, but that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take every possible precaution to secure that it shall be an entirely impartial Committee composed of the best men who can possibly be got; and I hope that when the Committee have deliberated and come to some conclusion, the conclusion to which they arrive will be acceptable to the noble Earl and all concerned.

TRAWLING PROSECUTIONS.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government whether it is correct that the Scottish Office have decided to prosecute the first fishermen on board the Norwegian trawlers whose masters have been released from prison and their fines remitted; whether the fishermen were not under a contract of service to their employers to obey the masters of the vessel on which they were serving at sea; and whether the masters of each of the Norwegian vessels were not entitled both under International Law and the North Sea Convention, 1882, to fish with the trawl outside the three mile limit of territorial waters, and to order all those serving on board their vessels to take part in such trawling operations.

When I put this Question on the Paper I did not think it possible that the prosecutions to which I alluded could take place, especially after the statesmanlike speech of my noble friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in reply to the Question put to him about three weeks ago by Lord Balfour of Burleigh. I rather thought there had been undue delay in refunding the money to those owners who had paid the fines illegally inflicted on the Norwegian skippers, and that there had also been undue delay in withdrawing the summonses against the other men who had not then been tried. I think I had a right to assume that, not only from the speech of my noble friend Lord Fitzmaurice, which I am sure was made in perfect good faith, but also from an official letter which I received from the Foreign Office a few days before that speech was made, and which was to this effect—

> "Foreign Office, February 16th, 1907—I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst. respecting the case of the Norwegian and Swedish fishermen who have recently been convicted in the Scottish Courts for trawling in the Moray Firth. I am to state, for your Lordship's information, that the men imprisoned have now been released and that Sir E. Grey is in communication with Mr. Secretary Sinclair with a view to all further prosecutions being stopped pending the consideration of the whole question by His Majesty's Government."

I certainly took that to refer, not only to the Norwegian skippers who had been illegally convicted, but also to the vessels themselves and to the crews on board. One thing is perfectly clear. It does not matter which man on board the vessel is convicted, it is impossible for him to pay the fine; and if it is paid at all it has to be paid by the owner. Therefore it was a perfect farce to say that the fines would be remitted which the owners had paid for their skippers if it was at that moment intended immediately to prosecute fishermen, deck-hands, or cabin-boys and sentence them to fines which in their turn would also have to be paid by the owners.

Twenty men are to be prosecuted next Monday, and one of the cases is that to which I drew the attention of the Foreign Office a month ago. The skipper and the vessel have arrived at Grimsby. The skipper states that he was boarded seven miles from shore, prosecuted, convicted, and released on the payment of the fine, which it was promised should be refunded but which has not been yet handed back. The only British fisherman he had on board was a deck-hand, and he had only been taken on owing to the illness of a Scandinavian, all the other members of the crew being Scandinavians. That man has been called upon to appear before the Sheriff Court in Scotland, where he is to be prosecuted for illegal fishing under the orders of the very skipper who has been released.

The next report I have is of six English first fishermen on board six other Norwegian vessels whose masters had been first convicted. The masters were subsequently relsased, and their fines have, I believe, been remitted. These men who are to be prosecuted are all first fishermen on board the very vessels the skippers of which have been released and the fines remitted. The next case is the worst of the lot. James Wilson writes that he is an English pilot, that he was taken on board the Norwegian steam trawler "Sandow," and that he acted solely on the master's instructions. This pilot has now been summoned to appear before the Sheriff Court, and I have not the slightest doubt that every one of these men will be convicted. It is not a question of whether they are going to be summoned before the courts legally or not; it is a question of fairness and justice. These men did not know they were doing any wrong. It is not denied that they were legally signed on under agreement by which they were bound to obey the master at sea. It has been declared by the Norwegian Government that they will not defend any vessel which is British owned and not legitimately a Norwegian vessel, and the Foreign Office have received an assurance in all these cases from the Norwegian Minister that these vessels are Norwegian. I am perfectly certain that the statement I made the other day is correct, and that the original fleet mentioned at the Aberdeen Conference two years ago has been dispersed.

What will be the position? The position will be this. If these men are convicted, as they will be, and if their fines are paid, they will be paid by the very owners to whom the fines in respect of their skippers have already been remitted. But it is quite probable that the owners will say that as the men are now going to be convicted, not under international law, but under some parochial by-law of Scotland, they do not feel themselves compelled to pay the fines; and therefore these men, who have been simply obeying the masters' orders legally given, will have to go to prison. Everyone must own that that would be a scandal and a gross injustice. I was under the impression, as I have already said, that, the Scottish Office having committed a great blunder in first of all boarding the vesels and then getting the skippers convicted, there was to be an end to the matter for the present, and the Government were going to take it into consideration. I would appeal to them, in the circumstances, to abandon these prosecutions. What can they gain by them? They have already established the majesty of their parochial by-law in the case of Cressy on board the "Norseman." In these circumstances I think it might be fairly assumed that no Norwegian owner would be desirous of signing on Englishmen.

I would venture to appeal to the Government to look upon the matter in the broad light of fairness and justice, and not from a merely technical point of view. I think I have some claim to make this request to His Majesty's Government. No one has done more than I have to stop British-owned vessels sailing under a foreign flag. I think the Scottish Office, at any rate, ought to be obliged to me for that, and as far as I am concerned I will promise to do my best, pending the full consideration of the matter by the Government, to prevent any further difficulties of the sort arising. I would go further and suggest to His Majesty's Government that the Foreign Office might very well, now that the matter is under consideration, appeal to the Norwegian Government not to register English-owned vessels under their flag. At the same time I cannot admit that an Englishman should be the only man who is not entitled to earn a living on the high seas under a foreign flag.

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL: My Lords, I think that all who have anything to do with the fishing industry will be sensible of the obligation they are under to the noble Lord who has raised this question for the interest he has always taken in that industry. On this occasion I am happy to say that the noble Lord has, to a trifling extent, been misinformed as to the facts. There is no intention to proceed against the fishermen on board these Norwegian trawlers for the same offence in respect of which the masters who had their fines remitted were convicted. The cases to which the noble Lord has referred have all occurred, I am informed, since those cases. The noble Lord shakes his head, but I am informed that that is so. That is the answer to the first part of the Question standing on the Paper in the name of the noble Lord.

With regard to the second half, I have to say that His Majesty's Government have no special information as to the terms of the contract under which the fishermen are serving. No doubt they, like the master in charge of the vessel, had received superior orders, and it would seem that the responsibility for those orders and the consequences would properly lie with those who gave them. Under Section 7 of the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Act, 1889, as the noble Lord is aware, a by-law may be passed closing the Moray Firth. This by-law has been passed by this authority, and trawling within the specified limits has been declared by the High Court of Justiciary to be illegal for all persons of whatever nationality.

The North Sea Fisheries Convention of 1882 has no bearing on the present case, Norway not having been one of the original signatory Powers to that Convention, and not having hitherto availed herself of her option to adhere thereto, which was expressly reserved in the additional Article. As a matter of international consideration the Government have remitted the penalty imposed upon certain foreign subjects in the manner and for the reasons stated by my noble friend the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in your Lordships' House on the 21st of last month. With regard to future action, it is intended to proceed against British subjects who are accused of violation of this municipal law. I may also remind the noble Lord that, as already stated in another place, the Norwegian Government have of their own motion intimated, through their Minister at this Court, that they have instructed a warning to be addressed to all owners of Norwegian fishing boats who are known to carry out trawling in the Moray Firth to cease this kind of fishing in present circumstances.

STANDING COMMITTEE

Report from the Committee of Selection for the Standing Committee, that they have added the Earl of Chichester and the Lord Courtney of Penwith to the Standing Committee; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at five minutes before Seven o'clock, till Tomorrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 11th March, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time to-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz. :—Marriages Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

South Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Leith Harbour and Docks Bill.—" To authorise the Commissioners for the harbour and docks of Leith to vary the method of charging rates on steam vessels," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS BILL).

Petition from Oatlands Colliery Railway Pits, Derbyshire, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Central Hackney, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND).

Return [presented 8th March] to be printed. [No. 71.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 9th March, 1907, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (CODE 1907).

Copy presented, of Code of Regulations for Day Schools, 1907, with Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

Copy presented, of Abstract of Accounts of the University of Glasgow for the year ending 30th September, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 72.]

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANK AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Annual Account presented, for the period ended 20th November, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 73.]

SUPERANNUATIONS.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 5th March, 1907, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the offices of Salaried Official Receiver in Bankruptcy and Inspector of Official Receivers, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 519 (East Africa Protectorate, Report for 1905–6) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3747 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CHARITY COMMISSION (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of Fifty-fourth Report of the Charity Commissioners for

England and Wales [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (HALF-YEARLY STATEMENTS).

Copy ordered, "of Statement of the number of Paupers relieved on the 1st day of January, 1907, and similar Statement for the 1st day of July, 1907, (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 272, of Session 1906)."—(*Dr. Macnamara*).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Promotion of Staff Officer in the Board of Works, Dublin.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that in the buildings division of the Board of Works, Dublin, a staff officer who received an appointment before the retirement of Mr. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy has since applied to have his position improved, and, seeing that he has not had any reply to his application, will he ask the Board of Works, Dublin, what is the cause of the delay; and whether it is the Secretary of that Department who is responsible for having this application ignored.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that the staff officer referred to received his appointment in 1903. In 1906 he applied for an improvement of his position. The application was laid before the Board by the Secretary; and the Board, having considered it, wrote a minute refusing the application, which was read to the officer on the 23rd June, 1906.

Unregistered Trade Unions and Payment of Income-Tax.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether unregistered trade unions are, like friendly societies, exempt from the payment of income-tax on interest for investments; and, if not, what are the reasons; and will he consider the desirability of applying the condition of exemption to unregistered trade unions.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The answer is in the negative. The exemption in favour of unregistered friendly societies is limited to those societies whose income does not exceed £160 a year. It depends on an express statutory provision, viz., Section 8 of The Finance Act, 1904, and there is no similar provision in favour of unregistered trade unions. The whole question of the claim of bodies, whether corporate or unincorporate, to share in the relief afforded to natural persons by the Income Tax Acts on the ground of smallness of income is receiving my careful consideration.

Tenders for the Bellaghy-Castledawson Mail Service.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether it has now been decided to invite and consider tenders for the Bellaghy-Castledawson mail service.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have given instructions for fresh tenders for this service to be invited.

Alleged Irregularities—Belturbet Post Office.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that the post office at Belturbet, on 29th December last, was entered by the police, who found official papers and postal orders scattered about the place; that the police found the postmaster drinking in a public-house; and what action, if any, has been taken in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) This matter has not been brought to my attention, but I am making inquiry and will communicate the result to the hon. Member.

Pending Changes in Metropolitan Telegraphic Work.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): To ask the Postmaster General whether he can state the nature of the pending administrative changes in telegraph work in the metropolitan districts; and whether it is proposed to alter the proportion now existing between the men and women on the staff.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The change to which I referred in my former Answer to the hon. Member is the extension and completion of the metropolitan intercommunication switch. No change of policy is at present contemplated as regards the relative number of men and women employed in telegraph work.

Postmen's Rounds—Cycle and Footwork.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General what is the maximum limit of a postman's daily round when the duty consists partly of cycle and partly of footwork; and what is the proportion of one to the other.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The maximum distance travelled by a walking postman is eighteen miles a day and that by a postman on cycle is twenty-eight miles. For a duty which is performed partly on foot and partly on cycle, the maximum length is between eighteen and twenty-eight miles, being fixed in each case according to the proportion between the distance travelled on foot and on cycle.

Navy Officers—Counting of Service.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the officers in battleships and cruisers with reduced nucleus crews will count their time of service as sea time in the same way as ships manned on a higher scale; and whether all ships in the Home Fleet are on the same basis in respect of counting their time as sea time.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) This matter is under consideration.

The Beatts Patent Trenching Tool.

MR. WILKIE (Dundee): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received from Mr. C. Beatts, of Dundee, a patent trenching tool; if so, whether the same has been before the experts in his Department; and with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This gentleman has submitted patent trenching tools, all of which have been carefully considered by the War Office expert officials concerned. It is regretted that none of the tools come up to War Department requirements, and Mr. Beatts has been so informed.

The Army Reductions.

MR. CLAVELL SALTER (Hants, Basingstoke): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that, as shown by the Estimates for 1906–7 and 1907–8, the Regular Army has been, or is about to be, reduced by 19,189 officers and men serving with the colours, viz., Cavalry 313, Royal Horse and Field Artillery 2,094, Royal Garrison Artillery 2,516, Royal Engineers 1,373, Infantry of Line 11,843, Foot Guards 838, Army Service Corps 212, these reductions, or any of them are to be regarded as temporary or permanent; and, if the former, to what extent is it proposed to repair the shortage, and in which branches of the service.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am unable to follow the hon. Member's figures for the Artillery or for the total reductions, but, generally speaking, there is no present intention of restoring the numbers reduced.

Commission Charged by Crown Agents.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will grant a Return of commission charged by the Crown agents during the years 1904, 1905, and 1906, similar to that granted in 1904 by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Certainly. The Return will be granted as soon as my hon. friend moves for it.

Establishment of the Army—Number of Officers.

Mr. GODFREY BARING (Isle of Wight): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will lay upon the Table a Return showing the total number of officers of the Regular Army on the establishment on 1st April, 1905, and the number proposed under the scheme of the Secretary of State for War, the Return to indicate the numbers employed with the different arms of the service, including Regular officers attached to Auxiliary Forces, officers on half-pay, officers only employed for a portion of the year not to be included.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) At this stage it is not practicable to give any figures for the new scheme beyond those contained in the Estimates for 1907–8. The number of officers provided for in Estimates 1905–6 and in 1907–8 are as follows :—

	1905–6	1907–8
Household Cavalry	72	72
Cavalry of the Line	751	751
Royal Horse and Field Artillery	1,108	1,126
Royal Garrison Artillery	938	804
Royal Engineers	1,033	1,045
Foot Guards	305	277
Infantry of the Line	4,673	4,256
Army Service Corps	467	458
Royal Army Medical Corps	1,049	1,021
Army Ordnance Corps and Department	239	237
Army Veterinary Corps	—	162
Colonial Corps	390	304
Total	11,025	10,513
Permanent Staff :—		
Honourable Artillery Company	1	1
Imperial Yeomanry	58	58
Militia Artillery	71	58
Volunteer Artillery	66	66
Militia Infantry	253	254
Volunteer Infantry	228	227
Volunteer Medical Corps	4	4
Volunteer Motor Corps	1	—
Total	682	668
General Total	11,707	11,181

Establishment of Regular Troops.

Mr. GODFREY BARING: To ask the Secretary of State for War what was the establishment of the Army and the number of the First Class Army Reserve on 1st April, 1899; what is the establishment of regular troops proposed under the scheme of the Secretary of State; what number of recruits is required to meet the new establishment; what proportion of men it is calculated will pass into the First Class Army Reserve annually when the normal establishment is reached; and will he lay upon the Table the figures from which it is estimated that the First Class Reserve will normally be maintained at 115,000.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The establishment of Army non-commissioned officers and men on the 1st April, 1899, was 228,923, and the strength of the Reserve was 81,384. Under the proposed scheme as shown by the Estimates for 1907–8, omitting the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards, the establishment is 229,819, and the number of recruits to maintain this establishment is calculated at 37,710 annually. The numbers passing to the Reserve annually will fluctuate from year to year, but assuming that Section D is open all the time the Reserve is calculated to reach a normal of 115,000. I will lay Papers upon the Table which will give the actuarial figures and explain how they are arrived at.

Arming of Southend Companies of 1st Essex Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers.

Mr. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.) To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Companies 2 and 9 of the 1st Essex Royal Garrison

Artillery Volunteers, stationed at Southend-on-Sea, have only two 15-pounders, and that consequently drill cannot be carried out by the majority of the men attending for the purpose; whether arrangements can be made to supply these companies with a sufficient number of guns; whether he is aware that these companies are without the necessary stores for their guns, and, in particular, without rammers, aiming posts, sights for back-laying, clinometer, and range-finder; and whether steps can be taken to supply them with these stores.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The guns in question form part of the number allotted to the general defence of the Thames and Medway Command, and the distribution to the different companies of the corps was made in accordance with the wishes of the commanding officer of the corps. The number cannot be increased. The completion of guns in a command, with their approved stores, rests with the general officer commanding, and steps had already been taken in this instance. No complaint has been received from the corps.

The Colonial Conference and Treatment of Indians in British Colonies.

Mr. SCOTT (Ashton-under-Lyne): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the question of the *status* and treatment of His Majesty's Indian subjects in British Colonies has been included in the agenda submitted by the Imperial Government to the Imperial Colonial Conference about to be held; and, if not, whether, in view of the importance of the matter and the interest it has aroused both here and in India, the Government will take steps to bring the question before the Conference.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I should be glad if the hon. Member would kindly refer to the Answer that I gave to a similar Question on the 5th instant.†

Printing of Telegraph Forms in Ireland.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can arrange that the supply of the 12,000,000 telegram forms per year, for use in Ireland from the postal authorities in London, can be given to an Irish printing house; and whether he is aware that several printing establishments in Dublin would be willing to provide adequate plant for the execution of this work.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that the existing contracts provide for the supply of all telegram forms to the General Post Office, and they are thence distributed over the United Kingdom as required. No separate arrangement is made for Ireland; but the cost of printing the number mentioned in the hon. Member's Question would be under £150 a year. I see no reason for making the change which he proposes.

Salaries of English and Irish County Court Judges.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the amount of salary allowed to a county court Judge in Ireland and England respectively; the amount of daily remuneration allowed to a deputy county court Judge in Ireland and England respectively; and whether this daily remuneration in either country is paid by the Crown or by the county court Judge for whom the deputy is acting.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The salary is £1,500 in England, and £1,400 in Ireland. Deputies, in case of illness, are paid out of the salary of the Judge in both countries. I understand that the rate of payment is 4 guineas a day in England, and that in Ireland it varies from 5 to 10 guineas a day according to the duration of the employment, etc.

Receipts of the National Physical Laboratory.

Mr. O. C. PHILIPPS (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, what have been the receipts of the National Physical Laboratory for each of the last three years respectively, from fees, from grants, from Government, and from other sources.

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† See Col. 613.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I have received from the Laboratory the following statement of their receipts for the last three calendar years:—

Receipts.

Account.	1904.			1905.			1906.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Government grant - - -	4,000	0	0	5,125	0	0	5,875	0	0
Gassiot fund - - - - -	453	14	4	455	11	9	452	8	11
Donations and subscriptions -	2,313	13	0	2,056	10	0	1,910	10	0
Charges for work done - -	5,625	16	0	5,734	18	0	5,796	7	6
Charges for commissions for Foreign and Colonial Governments - - - - - -	318	1	8	222	6	0	253	12	5
Miscellaneous receipts - -	41	18	9	42	14	8	31	6	0
	12,753	3	9	13,637	0	5	14,319	4	10

Promotions in the Accountant's Department, Board of Works, Dublin.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that, in the recent promotions in the Accountant's Department, Board of Works, Dublin, the staff officer who obtained the post vacated by the present accountant was placed there over the heads of at least three others who had longer service under the Board, and who were more competent to fill the position; and whether, in view of the fact that one of these gentlemen was on a former occasion recommended for a first-class clerkship, he will ask the Board of Works to explain their inconsistency in this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) If the hon. Member refers to the case of Mr. Sidwell, I have nothing to add to the reply given by my predecessor on 17th May last.† There have been no subsequent promotions in the Accountant's Department.

Commissions Paid by the Church Estates Commissioners.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the right hon. Member for Sheffield (Hallam Division), as Church Estates Commissioner, whether he will say what are the sums which have been spent directly or indirectly in commissions by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in each of the ten years last past; and what is the largest sum in each year so paid to any one person or firm.

(*Answered by Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*) The Answers given to the hon. Member's Questions of 1st November and 27th November‡ last by the hon. Member for East Bristol contain the facts as to the commissions paid by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to their agents, and no other commisions, except the architects' charges set out in the accounts appended to the Report for Parliament and the usual brokers' charges on dealings with stock, are paid directly or indirectly by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

The Irish Ordnance Survey.

MR. FIELD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether it is intended to have all the work connected with the Ordnance Survey in Ireland carried out in that country; and whether the supervision and arrangement of this work will, in future, be transferred to an Irish department.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clvii., 634.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, clxiii., 1342–3; clxv., 1433.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) No change is contemplated in the existing arrangements for the conduct of the Ordnance Survey. The divided control suggested would not be attended by either efficiency or economy.

The Butter and Margarine Bill—Date of Second Reading.

MR. W. HOPE (Somersetshire, N.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is in a position to say when the Second Reading of the Butter and Margarine Bill will be taken.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) I am unable to say at present when the Second Reading of this Bill willl be taken. I hope at an early date.

Cattle and Sheep Landed and Killed at Deptford.

DR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can give the number of cattle and sheep landed and killed at the Deptford foreign cattle market during the year ending 31st December, 1906, the particular countries from which the cattle and sheep were imported, and the number from each country.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) During the year 1906, 60,784 cattle from Canada, 138,722 cattle from the United States, and 2,375 sheep from Canada were landed and killed at Deptford.

Foot-and-mouth Disease.

DR. COOPER: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is in a position to state whether any cattle or sheep have been officially reported as suffering from foot-and-mouth disease in Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Westphalia, the Rhine Provinces, or Holland, during the year ending 31st December, 1906; and, if any, whether he can state the particular localities in which the outbreak occurred and the number of cattle and sheep affected.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) No cases of foot-and-mouth disease were confirmed in Denmark in 1906. In the latter part of the year nine outbreaks occurred in the province of Limburg, in Holland, 104 animals being affected. With regard to Germany a large number of cases were confirmed in the west and north-west of the country during 1906, but I um unable to state without further inquiry the actual numbers in the various provinces mentioned by my hon. friend. I shall be happy, however, to make further inquiry on the subject, and I will acquaint my hon. friend with the result.

Inspection of Imported Boneless Meat.

MR. FIELD: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has made any arrangement for the inspection of imported boneless meat; whether he has made any inquiries respecting how it is prepared; whether it is inspected before being frozen; whether he can state how it is disposed of in this country; and whether it is used extensively in the manufacture of pork sausages.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have no authority to make an arrangement of the kind referred to in the first part of the Question in the absence of such powers as are proposed to be given by the Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Bill now before the House. I have caused inquiries to be made as to the preparation of boneless meat. It is of course liable to whatever inspection is required by the laws of the country from which it comes, and packages of it frequently bear labels stating that inspection has taken place, presumably before freezing. I understand that imported boneless meat is supplied to makers of various meat preparations in this country, and that imported boneless pork is employed in the manufacture of pork sausages. The Local Government Board's inspector of foods ascertained that in 1905 the importation of the kind of boneless pork specially used for sausage making amounted to about 130 tons.

Fees and Emoluments of Poor Law Medical Officers.

MR. HADDOCK (Lancashire, North Lonsdale): To ask the President of the Local Government Board what is the total sum received in fees or emoluments by medical officers of workhouses and medical superintendents of Poor Law infirmaries for the certification of pauper lunatics, from the year 1896 to the end of the financial year 1906, inclusive.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Returns do not show separately the amount of these fees, and I am, therefore, not in a position to give the information asked for.

Overcrowding and Disease in Brentford Workhouse School.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that, owing to continued overcrowding in the workhouse school belonging to the Brentford Board of Guardians, an outbreak of ophthalmia occurred in November, 1904; that in September, 1906, a second outbreak, affecting over 130 children, occurred; and that during January last an outbreak of diphtheria, affecting over fifty children, some of whom died, occurred; and whether he will urge upon the guardians the necessity of boarding-out within and beyond the union the children eligible for that method, and of hastening the arrangements for placing others in scattered homes within the union in order to relieve the long-standing overcrowding of the school.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am aware of the facts as to the outbreaks referred to and that from time to time there has been overcrowding in the school. I am very desirous that measures should be taken to prevent future overcrowding in respect of the children, and I understand that the guardians have had various schemes before them for providing further accommodation for them. They have met with difficulties in the matter, but various arrangements have been made to reduce the pressure, and steps are now being taken to provide certain scattered homes. I shall not lose sight of the subject.

Annual Report of Local Government Board—Suggested Division.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, with a view to the convenience of guardians, councillors, and other officials, he will consider the advisability of publishing the annual Report of the Board in two parts, so that those engaged in either branch of local government could purchase the portion relating to their work only; and whether he will consider the advisability of improving the compiling of this Report by explaining the figures and facts dealing with Poor Law administration.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have under consideration the proposal referred to in the former part of the Question, and I shall be prepared also to consider any suggestions which may be made to me as to that referred to in the latter part of it.

Railway and Shipping Rates.

MR. FIELD: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will cause an inquiry to be made through the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, asking the principal railway and shipping companies to furnish detailed information respecting import through rates, and likewise furnish the inland railway charges allowed on those through rates, and at the same time to obtain definite information respecting the charges made to Home traders for the inland carriage of goods the same distance to centres of population.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am taking steps to obtain information from railway companies and traders with regard to railway rates and other matters which I hope will throw light on the points referred to in the Question.

The Law of Copyright.

MR. WATERLOW (Islington, N.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, with a view to the early publication at popular prices of reprints, in as complete a form as possible, of books by well-known authors, in which the copyright has expired, he will consider, in any fresh legislation on the subject that may be contemplated, the question of so amending the Act of 1842 as to make clear the distinction between substantial changes or additions made by the author in any revised edition of a book, affecting the meaning of any important portion or portions thereof, and merely verbal or formal alterations having no such effect.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The point shall receive attention in connection with any proposals for amending (copyright) legislation. I understand, however, that as the law now stands merely verbal alterations have been held not to be entitled to copyright.

Progressive Rate of Pay for Stoker Petty Officers.

Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will state the date when the stoker petty officers will receive the progressive rate of pay as laid down by circular and which came into force for other stoker ratings on the 1st July, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Progressive rates of pay will be granted to the stoker petty officers entitled thereto as from the 1st April next.

Increased Pay for Labourers at Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar.

Colonel HARRISON-BROADLEY (Yorkshire, E.R., Howdenshire): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can explain why the labourers at the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, are not included in the recent rise of wages of 1s. per week which has been granted to the labourers employed at the Royal Clarence Victualling Yard and at other naval establishments; and whether a favourable answer can be returned to the petition which they addressed to the Admiralty on this subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) This increase has now been granted.

Surveying of West Coast of South America.

Mr. A. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty in what year surveying was last done by a surveying vessel belonging to the British Navy on the West Coast of South America between Guayaquil and the Straits of Magellan.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The date of the last survey was 1897.

The Match Industry—Poisonous and Non-poisonous Matches.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of match factories in this country and how many workers are employed in them; how many of these factories are at present making non-poisonous matches, and how many people are employed in this work; and whether he will cause a special Report on the match industry in Great Britain to be prepared.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) There are ten match factories in the country, or eleven, if one is included which only works intermittently. According to the latest Returns, those for 1904, the number of persons employed in the ten first-mentioned factories was 3,188. Two of these ten factories are occupied exclusively in manufacturing matches without white phosphorus, while three more of them manufacture matches without white phosphorus on a small scale, in addition to matches with white phosphorus. In the two factories which manufacture non-white-phosphorus matches exclusively 921 persons were returned as employed in 1904; the number so employed in the three factories partially engaged in the same manufacture could not be ascertained without further inquiries. I may point out that many of the persons employed in the factories which manufacture white phosphorus matches are not exposed to the phosphorus. I have laid upon the Table of the House a Report on the recent case of phosphorus poisoning at Messrs. Morelands, which also contains some observations upon the general question. I am considering what action to take upon it, and am unable at present to say whether a further Report will prove to be necessary.

Cutting of Trees in Kensington Gardens.

MR. MURRAY MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs): To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware of the extensive and indiscriminate nature of the polling and lopping of elms in Kensington Gardens, whereby the beauty of the Broad Walk and the neighbouring parts of the gardens is being ruined; whether he knows that perfectly sound limbs of trees have been hewn off, no attempt being made, apparently, to distinguish between sound and decaying branches; and will he give the House an assurance that this work of destruction will be stayed.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) I am personally watching the tree pruning in Kensington Gardens by frequent visits. Nothing is being done beyond what is considered necessary by my expert advisers. It is occasionally necessary to shorten sound limbs in order to restore the balance of a tree where it has been disturbed by the removal of decayed branches.

Allotment of Additional Grants for Training Colleges and Secondary Schools.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state how he proposes to allot the additional grant of £122,486 for buildings and maintenance for training colleges in the Estimates for 1907–8, Class 4, D 1; and how he proposes to allot the additional sum of £75,000 for secondary schools.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) It is impossible to set out in an Answer to a Question the various matters incident to the distribution of grants in respect of training colleges and secondary schools. The regulations that are regularly issued and presented to Parliament give full information on these matters, and they can be further discussed or elucidated, if needs be, in the debate on the Education Vote in this House.

The High Bank Rate—International Gambling Operations.

MR. FIELD: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, in his late official Report, stated that one of the principal reasons for the late high bank rate in England was due to the large demand for gold in London last autumn to pay the Egyptian growers, owing to the exceptionally high price of cotton ruling at the commencement of the cotton season; whether he is aware that this famine price was the outcome of a bull manipulation in options and futures in the Alexandria and Liverpool cotton exchanges, based on an estimated American cotton crop for 1906–7 of about 2,000,000 bales smaller than it has turned out; and whether, in view of the amount of gold taken from the London market at the same period by certain American financiers, by the aid of foreign bills accepted by London bankers, which had the principal effect of artificially raising the value of money in the United Kingdom, he will say what steps does His Majesty's Government propose to take in order to safeguard Home trade and finance against these international gambling operations in London, Liverpool, Egypt, and America.

MR. FIELD: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exechequer whether he is aware of the fact that of late years it has become customary with English banks and bankers to accept foreign bills with the main object of fostering international gambling operations in foreign securities; whether he is aware it is estimated that there are some £80,000,000 sterling in foreign finance paper, principally American, held in London at the present time with that object; that it is recognised that should American securities further fall heavily it may lead to a financial crisis in England; is he aware that, in order to prevent panic, the leading bankers have been compelled to take serious steps to stop the flow of gold out of the country; and whether, under these circumstances, His Majesty's Government will take any measures calculated to prevent a continuance of such dangers arising from such international financial gambling operations.

MR. FIELD: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that it is estimated that many millions pounds sterling have been lately lost by certain English speculators in gambling operations in American securities and in Siberian mines, due to a concerted international bear raid, especially with regard to the latter's shares, and that in order to meet their gambling differences large blocks of Consols, gilt-edged and other high-class British securities, have had to be melted, causing universal depression in the value of all these securities; and what steps does His Majesty's Government intend to take to stop these international bull and bear stock exchange gambling operations in England, with a view of protecting the interests of the *bona fide* investors in the said securities.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) Dealing with this and the hon. Member's two subsequent Questions of like character together, I may say that I think the main cause of the recent monetary stringency has been general commercial activity of a sound and healthy character. In times of such activity there is always a certain amount of speculation, and such speculation is, up to a point, perfectly legitimate. When carried to excess, the results are, I agree, highly mischievous. But it would be very difficult to define the precise point at which speculation should be repressed, nor do I think that the matter is one which could be effectively dealt with by legislation.

Stamp Duties on Transfer of Foreign Securities.

MR. FIELD: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he will consider the advisability of introducing in his forthcoming Budget a regulation that the transfer of all foreign securities shall be subject to stamp duties, with a view to lessen the burden of taxation on residents in the United Kingdom; and also to compel gamblers in options and futures to contribute to the revenue.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The hon. Member's suggestion shall have my consideration.

Congregational Minister of Bowes Park and Income-tax Assessment.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Crown last summer allowed to the Congregational minister of Bowes Park a special deduction from his assessment to Schedule D of the income-tax of £5 in respect of the estimated rental of his study.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The deduction in question was allowed last year in the following circumstances. The minister appealed to the High Court against an adverse decision of the Local Commissioners of Income Tax, and the Crown permitted the case to go by default, because they were advised that upon the case, as stated by the Commissioners, the Court would be precluded from dealing with the question really at issue. The withdrawal was, however, upon the understanding that the Crown would take steps to raise the question again on the assessment for 1906–7. This has now been done. The District Commissioners have pronounced against the validity of the claim to deduct, and the minister in question has demanded a case for the consideration of the High Court.

Refusal of Permission to Prosecute Indian Journal.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the refusal of the Punjab Government to allow the prosecution of the Civil and Military Gazette, as prayed for by the Punjab Indian Association, for the publication of letters tending to produce racial discord; and whether he will consider, in communication with the Government of India, the desirability of taking some steps to discourage the publication of such inflammatory utterances in the Anglo-Indian Press.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I have seen a newspaper report as to the refusal of permission to prosecute in the case mentioned. As at present advised, I do not think it necessary to take any special action in the direction suggested.

Completion of the Purchase Scheme for the Bandon Estate, County Cork.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners can now say when the purchase scheme of the Bandon estate, Ardprior, Buttevant, county Cork, will be completed; and whether, in view of the fact that the purchase was sanctioned in March, 1904, the Commissioners will facilitate the completion of this sale with the least possible delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The purchase agreements in this case were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in April, 1905. The Commissioners anticipate that the estate will shortly reach its proper turn for inspection, but they are unable to state definitely when the sale will be completed.

Right of Cutting Sedge on the Logan Estate, County Mayo.

DR. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the annoyance and expense to which the poor tenants on the Logan estate, situate at Shraheen, Aughagower, near Westport, county Mayo, have been put to by the action of the landlords in prosecuting them for cutting sedge on an adjacent mountain; could he say whether any landlord ever tried to deprive their tenants of the right to cut sedge before the Logans came into possession of the property; is he aware that not only the present tenants, but their ancestors, always enjoyed the right of cutting sedge on this mountain, and that such right has been upheld in the Courts; and will he see that those poor tenants are no longer subjected to these annoyances.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that the prosecution in question, which was at the suit of the landlord, came before the Westport petty sessions some weeks ago, when the magistrates dismissed the case upon the ground that they had no jurisdiction to deal with it. The solicitor to the landlord then stated that he would renew the case at quarter sessions. The question at issue appears to be one as to the legal rights of the persons concerned, which can only be decided by a Court of law. The Government have no power to interfere in the matter.

Irish Constabulary Force Fund.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether complaints have been made to the Government by members and ex-members of the Irish police force regarding the Constabulary Force Fund, its control and management; and, in view of the fact that numbers of the force are expected, if not indirectly compelled, to contribute monthly towards it, he will state what steps, if any, have been taken by the police authorities to wind it up.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Constabulary Force Fund was closed for new entrants by the Act of 1883. Members of the force who joined before that date are required by statute to subscribe to the fund. The fund is being gradually wound up by meeting its obligations to widows and orphans of subscribers as they arise. For full information on the subject, I would refer the hon. Member to the numerous Answers given by my predecessor last session, and in particular to Parliamentary Paper, No. 118, of 1891.

Grievances of Veterinary Department of Irish Board of Agriculture.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether a memorial has been received by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction from the veterinary staff setting forth the grievances under which they labour and asking for a revision of service and salaries; and can he say what decision has been come to on the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell*). The memorial has been received and is under consideration.

Purchase of Village of Ballacolla.

MR. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners propose purchasing the whole village of

Ballacolla, Queen's County, in conjunction with the agricultural portion of Captain Caldbeck's estate or only the few large business houses in the village.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the whole village of Ballacolla is not included in the estate proposed to be purchased by them.

Sale of the Ballacolla Estate.

MR. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the large graziers and business men amongst whom Mr. Roper, agent to Captain Caldbeck, Ballacolla, Queen's County, has parcelled out the untenanted land on the estate, have received notice from the landlord to proceed with tilling and sowing operations; and, in view of this fact, will he ask the Estates Commissioners to expedite the purchase of the estate and see that the untenanted land is reserved for the purposes provided for under the Act of 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are not yet in a position to add anything to the reply which I gave on 25th February to the hon. Member's Question on this subject.†

The Irish Development Grant.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he could state how long it would take to exhaust the entire equivalent grant of £185,000 accruing to Ireland in the Development Grant at the present rate of progress in the issue of Land Stock; and whether the charges in connection with the same are likely to equal the whole amount of the equivalent grant in the near future.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am unable to give anything approaching a precise answer to this Question, having regard to the fact that the charges upon the Development Grant will depend not only upon the amount of Land Stock which it may be found necessary to issue from time to time, but also upon the dates and prices of issue. I understand that the charge for 1907–8 on account of stock already issued will amount to some £70,000, and that, assuming future issues to be made at a discount of 12 per cent., the charge in respect of each million of stock will be about £3,900.

Grant for Marine Works at Falchorrib.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the sum of £1,000 recently voted by the Congested Districts Board for the proposed works at Falchorrib, county Donegal, is in addition to or in substitution for the similar sum allocated in 1902 from the marine works grant, and subsequently found to be insufficient for the purpose; and whether he can now state the result of the correspondence on this subject between the Board and the county council of Donegal.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The hon. Member is mistaken is supposing that the Congested Districts Board have voted any sum in respect of improvements at Falchorrib. It is proposed to expend a sum of £800 out of the Marine Works Fund upon works at Falchorrib, and the county council have agreed to contribute £200. The Board of Works have been asked to prepare plans and specifications for the works.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Naval Defence of Jamaica.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the naval defence of the inhabitants of the Island of Jamaica is provided by ships of the Royal Navy; and whether the taxpayers of Jamaica make any contribution towards the cost of these ships, or towards the cost of the naval defence of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. LAMBERT, Devonshire, South Moulton): The naval defence of Jamaica, as in the case of all British Colonies, is provided for in the general strategical disposition of the Fleet. The Colony makes no contribution.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1239–40.

Rosyth.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the total estimated expenditure at Rosyth during 1907–8?

MR. LAMBERT: £10,000.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what has been the total expenditure upon Rosyth during 1906–7.

MR. LAMBERT: The estimated total expenditure upon Rosyth during 1906–7 is £8,000.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Has the Government any serious intention of pressing on with the works at Rosyth?

MR. LAMBERT: I explained the other day very fully the reasons why the Government have taken plenty of time before embarking upon this matter.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: But the subject of these works has been under the minute consideration of the Admiralty since the year 1903.

MR. LAMBERT: It has not been under the consideration all that time of the present Board of Admiralty.

New Army Scheme—Special Reservists.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): On behalf of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any calculation has been made showing the number of special reservists to be enlisted under the new scheme who will be twenty years of age, and therefore available for foreign service, when the plan is in working order; and, if so, what is the number which will be so available.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The details of the numbers of the special contingent have not yet been sufficiently worked out to enable me to give the right hon. Gentleman any figures of the nature which he desires. As regards the Infantry, the special contingent will not be required on mobilisation, but to supply six months' wastage, and it is confidently expected that the sixty-six third battalions with the Irish Militia will easily supply the numbers required.

Army Pension Payments.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that out of the number of Army pensioners in this country there are some who find it impossible to resist the temptation of spending upon drink all the money under their control, and in consequence are compelled to seek relief in the workhouse, whence they emerge on or about pay day for a fresh bout of drinking; and whether he will consider whether it is possible by restraint or otherwise to rescue these men from their manner of life, and to prevent them from continuing to disgrace an honourable profession.

MR. HALDANE: A Committee under the Chairmanship of the Paymaster-General is considering whether by a more frequent payment of pensions the temptation to dissipation to which some men are exposed by the possession of a considerable sum of money may be removed. In framing any regulations to this effect it is necessary to safeguard that there is no detriment to the interests of the general body of Army pensioners who are a well-conducted and respectable class of the community.

Suggested Gratuity for Volunteers.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, under the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, in order to obtain a high standard in and also to attract to the Territorial Army the best material in the manhood of the country, and as a reward for the sacrifices made by the working classes in giving up their time to drill and camp, he will consider the advisability of allocating the sum of £1,000,000 in granting to each Volunteer who serves four years, and makes himself efficient to the satisfaction of the authorities, a gratuity at the end of his term of service of the sum of £20.

MR. HALDANE: After careful study of the existing situation I came to the conclusion that such proposals as that of my hon. friend would not only fail—because on the footing of payment for services rendered they were wholly insufficient—but that they would be harmful. The basis of the Government appeal is for services to be voluntarily rendered to the British nation by British citizens and on national grounds, and it would be as wrong to try to pay for these as it would be to pay for many services of a civilian character which are cheerfully and readily given on a voluntary footing. Even the Army rate of pay which it is proposed to furnish is looked on by the Government not as reward but as bare indemnity against loss.

War Office Traffic on Hampshire Roads.

MR. WILLIAM NICHOLSON (Hampshire, Petersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that the present claim of the Petersfield Rural District Council for damage to the district roads by the War Office traffic incurred through the construction of Borden and Longmoor camps amounts to £6,870 5s. 3d.; whether, seeing that the claim of the Alton Rural District Council was paid by the War Office in January last, and that the Hampshire County Council have also lately been paid £2,000 on account of their claim, he will state why the amount due to the Petersfield Rural District Council has not been paid, or any payment made on account thereof; if he is aware that a 1d. rate in the Petersfield rural district only brings in £205 8s. 8d., and that a heavy rate will have to be levied for the current year unless the War Office should make an immediate payment; and if he can state why the ratepayers in the Petersfield rural district are called upon to find money in connection with the construction of barracks for the regular troops.

MR. HALDANE: The claims of the Petersfield Rural District Council mentioned refer to damage to roads in respect of which the War Department contractor is liable. It is possible that it may be found necessary to refer these claims, with those of several other councils, to arbitration, as allowed to the contractor under Clause 23a (iii) of contract, but every effort will be made to effect an early settlement of the matter. The claim of the council for War Department traffic, as distinguished from the contractor's traffic, has been settled. The circumstances in the case of Alton were different, in that the claim was settled without the necessity of proceeding to arbitration. The money paid to the Hampshire County Council was for strengthening roads, and is quite apart from their claim for damage by traffic.

Officers and the new Territorial Regiments.

MR. WALROND (Devonshire, Tiverton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers now serving in the auxiliary forces will join the proposed new territorial regiments without loss of seniority; what compensation will be provided for officers now joining the auxiliary forces and purchasing the uniforms of their regiments in the event of their units being disbanded; and whether, in any case, officers now serving will be allowed to retain and wear existing uniforms.

MR. HALDANE: Details of the character referred to in the Question have not yet been settled. The hon. Member may rest assured that every consideration will be shown to those officers now belonging to the auxiliary forces who become part of the territorial force.

Army Meat Supplies.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that tenders, returnable on 25th March, 1907, for the supply of meat from Australia and New Zealand for His Majesty's Forces in Gibraltar, were invited by the War Office on 14th December, 1906; that nine weeks later various alterations were made in the conditions of contract, among which was the withdrawal of the stipulation that these stores were to be imported from Australia and New Zealand; and, if so, will he state the reasons for these alterations, and specify the countries from which the supply of meat for the use of His Majesty's Forces was to be permitted.

MR. HALDANE: The alteration in the conditions of contract for the supply of meat at Gibraltar were made to ensure the best quality of meat being obtained at the most economical price. There is no limitation as regards countries for the supply of meat to the forces; and as the forces are scattered all over the globe they have naturally to obtain their meat supply from the best as well as the most economical sources.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: Was it not rather hard on Australia and New Zealand that the alteration should be made after the forms of tender and specifications had been sent out there?

Mr. HALDANE: The alterations were general and were simply intended to throw the thing open.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: I beg further to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the fact that tenders for the supply of preserved meat for delivery at Woolwich were invited by the War Office on the 26th of November, 1906, returnable at noon on the 30th of that month, that is, in ninety-six hours; and, further, that tender forms for a supply of preserved meat were issued on the 14th of February, 1907, for return on the 22nd idem, or eight days; and, if so, whether he will consider the possibility of giving longer notice of future War Office requirements, in order that British Colonies may have an opportunity of quoting for supplies.

Mr. HALDANE: Both demands were urgent. The reason for the short notice in the two cases was explained to the Agents General. Opportunity to tender was given to Australasian firms having London agents, of which some of them availed themselves. Longer notice will be given whenever possible.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: Could not timely notice be given to the Colonial firms?

Mr. HALDANE: We give no preference.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: Oh, oh!

Fire in the Aldershot Pay Office.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can furnish the House with any information as to the cause of the recent fire in the pay office at Aldershot; and whether any important documents were destroyed.

Mr. HALDANE: The inquiry into the cause of this outbreak of fire has not yet been completed, but the fire appears to have been due to live ashes having been left in a bucket in the room in which the fire originated. No important documents have been destroyed.

Cavalry Regiments for Scotland.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can give any information as to what provisions will be made for the permanent quarters for the two cavalry regiments which he hopes to assign to Scotland in place of the Scots Greys.

Mr. HALDANE: I am afraid that I am not able at the present moment to give the hon. Member any information on the points raised in his Question.

Dublin and the Royal Fusiliers.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a strong desire exists in Dublin that the Royal Irish Fusiliers should be allowed to remain there for the present; and, if so, whether he can arrange for the regiment to be left in Dublin for some time longer.

Mr. HALDANE: There is no intention to move the Royal Irish Fusiliers from Dublin for the present. The battalion is not due to be relieved till next trooping season—that is, some time between September next and March, 1908.

Army Reductions.

Mr. CLAVELL SALTER (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that, as shown by the Estimates for 1906–7 and 1907–8, the Regular Army has been, or is about to be, reduced by 19,189 officers and men serving with the colours, viz., Cavalry 313, Royal Horse and Field Artillery 2,094, Royal Garrison Artillery 2,516, Royal Engineers 1,373, Infantry of Line 11,843, Foot Guards 838, Army Service Corps 212, these reductions, or any of them, are to be regarded as temporary or permanent; and, if the former, to what extent is it proposed to repair the shortage, and in which branches of the service.

MR. HALDANE: I am unable to follow the hon. Member's figures for the Artillery or for the total reductions, but, generally speaking, there is no present intention of restoring the numbers reduced.

British Central Africa—Powers of Magistrates.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any decision has been arrived at regarding the grant of powers to magistrates in the British Central Africa Protectorate to inflict penalties for breach of contract.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I apprehend that my hon. friend is referring to the discussions in the Protectorate which led up to the enactment of the Native Labour Ordinance, 1906. That Ordinance was enacted on the 29th of September last, and I shall be happy to show my hon. friend a copy if he desires it.

British Central Africa—Legislative Council.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any decision has been arrived at regarding the provision of a legislative council for British Central Africa, similar to that recently granted to the neighbouring Protectorate of British East Africa.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State is awaiting a reply from the Commissioner of the Protectorate on certain matters of detail; that reply cannot now be long delayed; and there is every prospect that the necessary provision for the proposed legislative council will be made in the course of the next few months.

Military Garrison of Jamaica.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the charge borne last year by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom for the maintenance of a military garrison for the local defence of the inhabitants of Jamaica; and whether any reciprocal service was rendered by the taxpayers of Jamaica to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom.

MR. CHURCHILL: The military garrison of Jamaica is not maintained for the local defence of the inhabitants of that island, but as part of the general scheme for preserving the integrity of the British Empire, to the purposes of which scheme the Government of Jamaica contributes by maintaining a local artillery corps.

Communication with Jamaica—Railway and Steamship Subsidies.

MR HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, what is the amount of the subsidy paid by the Exchequer of the United Kingdom to the Elder Dempster Line or any other steamship line for the maintenance of a service of ships between the West India Islands and Canada; and whether the taxpayers of Canada or of Jamaica make any contribution to the cost of any railway or steamship communication between different portions of the United Kingdom.

MR. CHURCHILL: The subsidy paid by the Exchequer for the maintenance of a service of steamers between certain of the West Indian Islands (not including Jamaica) and Canada is £13,500 a year. There is no service so subsidised between Canada and Jamaica; neither do those Colonies contribute to the cost of railway or steamship communication in the United Kingdom.

Jamaica Sugar Industry Subsidies.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any sums of money have been granted in recent years at the expense of the taxpayers of the United Kingdom to assist the sugar industry of Jamaica; what is the aggregate amount of such sums; and whether the taxpayers of Jamaica have at any time made any grant to assist any industry in the United Kingdom.

MR. CHURCHILL: In the year 1902 the sum of £10,000 was granted from the Imperial Exchequer to assist the sugar industry of Jamaica, pending the abolition of sugar bounties under the Brussels Convention. The Answer to the last part of the Question is in the negative.

Free Grants to Jamaica.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give particulars of any grants that were made by the Parliament of this country to the inhabitants of the Island of Jamaica in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, distinguishing free gifts from loans; what is the aggregate amount of such free gifts and of such loans; and whether the whole of the loans have been repaid with the agreed interest upon them.

Mr. CHURCHILL: No free gifts were made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The loans to the island or to Jamaica proprietors in the same period amounted to £747,100, and they have not all been repaid. It should, however, be also remembered that Jamaica subscribed £1,000,000 in 1798 to aid the Mother Country in the war with France.

Mr. HAROLD COX: Was not there a free grant of £100,000 in the year 1832?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I will make inquiry.

West Indian Agricultural Department.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what sum has been charged to the taxpayers of the United Kingdom during the present century for the West Indian Agricultural Department, or for other assistance to agriculture in the West Indian islands; how much of this total sum has been received by the Island of Jamaica; and whether the taxpayers of Jamaica have made any contribution towards the assistance of agriculture in the United Kingdom.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The amount paid from Imperial funds during the present century, including the Estimates for the current year for the West Indian Agricultural Department, is £119,140. There was paid in aid of the sugar industry, pending the abolition of the sugar bounties, £250,000, total £369,140, of which the Government of Jamaica have received £11,877. My hon. friend is right in supposing that the Answer to the last part of his Question is in the negative.

Jamaica Earthquake—Government Grant.

Mr. O. C. PHILIPPS (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can now state what steps the Government propose to take to relieve the distress caused by the Jamaica earthquake.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The matter is receiving full consideration, but further information is expected and I am not in a position to make a statement at present.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, pending the arrival of the delegates appointed by the citizens of Kingston to lay before the Secretary of State full information regarding the situation arising out of the late earthquake, the Government will defer their decision regarding the question of a loan or grant and the proposals of the local authorities for rebuilding the city.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State has already decided that no final decision will be taken pending arrival of delegates.

Crown Agents' Commissions.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will grant a Return of commission charged by the Crown Agents during the years 1904, 1905, and 1906, similar to that granted in 1904 by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Certainly. The Return will be granted as soon as my hon. friend moves for it.

South African Mine Labour—Mr. Robinson's Experiments.

Mr. FIENNES (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of his statement on 31st July 1906 that Mr. J. B. Robinson would make experiments with white labour with Mr. Cresswell as manager, he can now say whether these experiments have begun; or, if not, what probability there is of a commencement being made.

Mr. CHURCHILL: No, Sir, I cannot say.

Canadian Preference for West Indian Sugar.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received information that the Canadian Government have decided to permit importations from British Colonies to Canada, *via* New York, to receive the benefits of the preferential tariff law; and whether he can estimate the value of this concession to the West Indian sugar trade.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State has not received official information of the decision referred to, which is reported in a Press telegram. The Colonial Office is not at present possessed of means of estimating what is the value to the West Indian sugar trade of the reported concession.

Charges against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State has received the protest of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association against the charges made against the Association in the speech of the Under-Secretary of 17th December; and whether he will state the nature of the reply which has been or will be sent to the request of the Association to be informed whether the Under-Secretary, in making these charges, was relying upon information supplied to the Colonial Office by its own officials or by any department of the Transvaal Government.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The protest in question has been received by the Secretary of State. No reply seems necessary, and none will be sent.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg further to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Lord Selborne has informed the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association that none of his communications to the Secretary of State could have given rise to the impression that the Association has not been doing all in its power to recruit native labour for the mines; and whether he will state the sources of the information upon which he based his charge against the Association in his speech of 17th December.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The Answer to the first part of my hon. friend's Question is in the affirmative; and to the second in the negative.

German South West Africa.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the statement of Herr Dernburg in the German Reichstag, with regard to the railways to be built in German South West Africa, that, in order to secure the increased value of the land, the districts adjoining the railway would be expropriated and be reserved by the Government, and that the taxation of land values would follow later; and whether any similar provisions are arranged for or contemplated in regard to railways on which British taxpayers' money is or may be advanced in the Gold Coast, Lagos, Northern Nigeria, and British East Africa.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I have seen the statement of Herr Dernburg as reported in the Press. The railways in the Gold Coast and Lagos have been and will be constructed without the assistance of the British taxpayer. When the construction of the Uganda Railway was authorised it was arranged that a strip of land on each side of the line should be reserved to the Government, and when any further railway construction is undertaken in East Africa or Northern Nigeria, I hope that it may be found possible to adopt a similar system.

Mr. Bucknill's Report.

Mr. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Governor of the Transvaal will be instructed to place the Report of Mr. Bucknill and the evidence taken by him at the disposal of the members of the Colonial Government.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Lord Selborne will, I presume, be ready to communicate the Report and evidence confidentially to Ministers, if Ministers ask for them, and it does not seem necessary to send special instructions on the subject.

Macedonian Reform.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any progress has been made with the scheme for reforming the judicial system in Macedonia.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury; for Sir Edward Grey): It is understood that the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments are formulating a scheme of judicial reform which will ultimately be submitted to the Powers. His Majesty's Government are not yet aware of the substance of this scheme.

Hague Conference.

Mr. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can now announce the date upon which the Hague Conference will be opened.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend cannot say definitely till the Russian Government announces the date; probably it will be early in June.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): Are the Government prepared to give the House the names of the delegates who will represent this country at the Conference?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I must ask for notice of that Question.

Murder of German Missionary in Persia.

Mr. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information on the subject of a claim made by Germany upon the Persian Government for an indemnity in connection with a recent murder of a German missionary in Persia; whether, in default of satisfaction, the German Government have demanded a cession of land; and, if so, whether he can state the particular region in which this land is situated.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend is informed that a cash payment only, which does not involve any political condition, if demanded as compensation.

Norwegian Trawlers in the Moray Firth.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the communication received from the Norwegian Minister stating that orders had been issued to warn all owners of Norwegian trawlers fishing in the Moray Firth to cease from doing so, and not to expect the support of their Government in case of proceedings being taken against them in Scotland, he can state what further action, if any, has been taken by His Majesty's Government; and what is the present stage of the negotiations.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend is still in communication with the various Departments of His Majesty's Government concerned, and is not in a position to make any further statement.

German Trade Arrangements with the United States.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the tariff arrangement reported to have been concluded between the Governments of Germany and the United States will confer an advantage upon German imports over those of the United Kingdom; and whether it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to claim similar concessions to British trade under the most-favoured-nation clause.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the new tariff arrangements between Germany and the United States include concessions to Germany in regard to consular regulations and Treasury rulings which will considerably reduce the duties on important German imports, while other countries receive no benefit, even under most-favoured-nation arrangements; and if he proposes to insist on the extension of similar concessions to merchandise sent from this country to the United States.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend is informed that a *modus vivendi* is being arranged between Germany and the United States. Nothing is at present settled, but it is probable that negotiations for tariff arrangements will follow. In the event of British trade being affected, His Majesty's Government will of course enter into such communications with the United States Government as may be required.

The Hague Conference and the Limitation of Armaments.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the question of the limitation of armaments is included in the formal programme of the Hague Conference.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The subject was not included in the original programme of subjects for discussion which was communicated to the Powers in April last, but since then the question of discussing it at the Conference has been under consideration. No further statement can be made about the programme of the Conference till the final invitation is issued by the Russian Government, who have been communicating with His Majesty's Government and other Powers respecting it.

Moray Firth.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in view of the fact that some years since Sir Colin Scott Moncrief, at a meeting of delegates of Foreign Powers held at Christiania, carried a resolution to the effect that any area of water which a Government closes for scientific purposes should remain closed against all nationalities, will he consider the expediency of communicating with the Foreign Powers, with a view to effect being given to that resolution in respect of the Moray Firth, seeing that those waters were closed by the British Government for the purposes of scientific research.

MR. RUNCIMAN: As the hon. Member is no doubt aware, scientific research was only one of the reasons which led His Majesty's Government to sanction the by-law of 1892, which closed the Moray Firth to trawling. In view of important questions of general policy which are involved, and with which more than one Department of His Majesty's Government is closely concerned, my right hon. friend is unable to give any undertaking that he will communicate with Foreign Powers in the sense desired by the hon. Member.

North Sea Fisheries Investigation Expenditure.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state what sum has been expended under the International Scheme for North Sea Fisheries Investigation by each of the participating Powers, viz., Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Norway, and Finland.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend has been requested by the Board of Trade to reply to this Question, and he would refer the hon. Member to the Answer which he gave him to a similar Question on the 5th instant.†

Australia and the Suez Canal.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Australian Government about the Suez Canal dues will be published for the information of Members.

MR. RUNCIMAN: Papers on the subject have already been laid on the Table on 4th March.

Income Tax.

MR. GODDARD CLARKE (Camberwell, Peckham): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any special instructions have this year been issued to income-tax collectors as to increased exertions in the collection of the tax in South London; and, if so, whether such instructions may be so modified as to prevent undue pressure being brought to bear upon the smaller income-taxpayers of the community.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): No such instructions have been issued.

Licence Duties.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been directed to the fact that brewers and distillers pay merely nominal licence duties, £1 and £10 respectively, irrespective of the size of their businesses or profits; and if he can see his way to introduce graduated duties, which shall have regard to the scale upon which brewing or distilling is carried on by the various licensees.

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† See Col. 613–14.

MR. ASQUITH: The licence duties are as stated. The principle of graduated *ad valorem* duties is not applied (nor is it, in my opinion, applicable) to licences which confer no monopoly privilege, but which are issued principally for registration purposes.

West Indian Ecclesiastical Charges.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to a sum of £1,372 10s. charged upon the Consolidated Fund for the salaries of the ecclesiastical establishment in the West Indies; how long this charge has been in existence; what is the aggregate sum that has been paid by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom on this account; and whether the taxpayers of Jamaica or of any other West India island make any contribution towards the salaries of the clergy of the United Kingdom.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The charge for the ecclesiastical establishment in the West Indies has been borne on the Consolidated Fund since 1824. The aggregate sum paid amounts to £1,126,960. In 1868, provision was made by Act of Parliament for the gradual reduction and final extinction of the charge. Although the payments in 1905–6 amounted, as shown in the Finance Accounts for that year, to £1,372, 10s., the annual sum now payable has been reduced to £522 10s.

Treatment of Girl Offenders.

MR. MYER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can see his way to advise that, in future, when young girls convicted under the First Offenders Act are sent by magistrates to a remand home they shall be accompanied by a female warder through the public streets instead of, as now, by a police officer.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The terms of the Question seem to indicate some misunderstanding on the part of the hon. Member. Convicted persons are not sent to remand homes. Young girls convicted and dealt with under the First Offenders Act are sometimes released on condition of their going to voluntary homes, and, when that is done, the practice in London is to send them there in charge of some one from the home, or, failing that, in charge of the matron. Possibly, however, the hon. Member refers to unconvicted prisoners remanded to the remand homes. In London such cases are sent in charge of a matron in a cab, but a police constable accompanies them. If the hon. Member will give me particulars of any case he has in view, I will make inquiries.

MR. MYER: I noticed a case last Tuesday.

Crime in the Holderness Division of Yorkshire.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the total number of indictable offences reported to the police in the Holderness Division of Yorkshire in the last twelve months for which statistics are available; in how many of these cases prosecutions were instituted; in how many cases juries refused to convict the accused; and how many offences were committed in the different branches of serious crime.

MR. GLADSTONE: I can give the figures for the Police Division of Holderness and the Borough of Beverley, which together include nearly the whole of the Parliamentary Division of Holderness. In the year 1906, 101 indictable offences were reported to the police—three offences against the person, five offences against property with violence, ninety-one offences against property without violence, and two cases of attempted suicide. Eighty-six persons were prosecuted, but most of them were dealt with summarily. Twelve persons were committed for trial, of whom three were acquitted and nine convicted.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): How many cases came from the district of Tranby Croft?

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): How many of the crimes were agrarian and in how many cases did the jury refuse to agree?

MR. GLADSTONE: I have given the House all the information I have.

MR. MOORE: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire?

MR. GLADSTONE: I do not think it necessary.

Administration of the Aliens Act.

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a woman, named Monita Greplowski, who was on her way to join her husband at Glasgow, was rejected by the immigration board at Grimsby on 1st March and ordered to return to Russia; and, if so, will he take steps, by amending the Aliens Act, to prevent a recurrence of such cases.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have made inquiry and find that the woman was refused leave to land on the ground that, in the words of the Act, she was, owing to a disease, viz., trachoma, likely to become a detriment to the public. She could produce no evidence of her marriage, had not seen her husband for two years, and had no letter from him or other evidence that he wished her to join him. The Medical Inspector stated that the trachoma was in an advanced stage, and this opinion was confirmed by a medical man acting on behalf of the woman. Another medical man was a member of the Board which heard the case. The Board inform me that they were unanimously of opinion that in these circumstances and as the woman was of a class in which it would be impossible for her to receive such treatment as would result in a cure of her disease—assuming that a cure is in any case possible—her admission would be a danger to the public.

MAJOR SEELY: Are we to understand that if a woman on her way to join her husband is found to be suffering from trachoma she will be refused admission?

MR. GLADSTONE: There was no proof she was on her way to join her husband.

MAJOR SEELY: But take such a case—would the woman under such circumstances be rejected?

MR. GLADSTONE: If found to be suffering from a dangerous disease I take it she would be rejected.

MAJOR SEELY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would amend the Act

MR. GLADSTONE: The hon. and gallant Member has not indicated the direction in which he desires the Act to be amended. Does he wish so to amend it as to admit aliens suffering from dangerous contagious diseases?

MAJOR SEELY: Certainly.

AN HON. MEMBER: Free trade in disease now.

Returns of Industrial Warfare.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been directed to the fact that while, according to Return No. 25 of 19th February, 1907, 8,678 men were killed and 23,773 men were injured in British warlike operations in the six years 1898–1903, about 25,000 persons were officially reported as killed and 700,000 officially reported as wounded in industrial operations in the United Kingdom in the same six years; and whether, in view of the loss of life and health in peaceful operations, he can promise that by suitable Amendments of the Factory and other Acts, and by stringent administration, he will do his utmost to protect the industrial population.

*MR. GLADSTONE: The figures of persons killed or injured during the six years mentioned by industrial accidents, given in the General Summary of the tenth Abstract of Labour Statistics issued by the Board of Trade appear to be killed, 26,470, and injured, 615,352. They include accidents in the shipping, railway, and other industries, as well as the industries for which my Department is more particularly responsible. I wish to point out, however, that these figures are of no avail to indicate the risk involved in industrial occupations, unless account is also taken of the numbers employed.

I hope the House needs no assurance from me that the safety and health of our workpeople is a matter of daily and hourly anxiety to the Departments concerned.

Tied Houses.

Mr. SEARS (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the forthcoming legislation relating to licensing, the Government will introduce any provisions in the interest of the consuming public and of the tenants dealing with the tied-house system, and to make the holder of a licence a *bona fide* trader resident on the premises, and not restricted to the sale of beer and spirit of any one particular brewery firm.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am afraid I must ask to be excused answering this Question before the Bill is introduced.

Colliery Life Saving Appliances.

Mr. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken, if any, to bring to the notice of the colliery owners and their officials in the United Kingdom the information collected by the two representatives sent to the Courrières Collieries, France, to investigate, on behalf of the British Government, the cause of that explosion and the method adopted in rescue work after that explosion; and, in face of the fact that two brave South Wales colliers have lost their lives at the recent explosion in Wales in consequence of there being no rescue apparatus at that colliery, what steps he proposes to take to prevent, so far as possible, a recurrence of such a catastrophe as has happened to the two rescuers at Llwynhendy Colliery.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The Courrières Report was published, and summaries of it were communicated to the trade papers, and I have every reason to believe that both were widely read. It was of course referred to the Royal Commission. As my hon. friend is aware, that Commission, on which the English, Welsh, and Scottish miners are represented, has been examining for some time the causes of explosions in mines, the best safeguards to adopt, and also the question of life-saving appliances. It has been found difficult to determine which kind of these latter apparatus is the best, but the experiments which are being made with them are, I understand, nearly completed. I am fully alive to the importance of the question, which is receiving my special attention.

Mr. BRACE: Has the right hon. Gentleman taken any steps to call the attention of colliery owners and colliery officials to the fact that the absence of life-saving appliances is a standing menace to the lives of men who engage in rescue work after explosions?

Mr. GLADSTONE: Of course the subject has been receiving attention for some time past, and I am sure those now inquiring into the matter are fully possessed of the responsibility and urgency of the matter, and that they will report as soon as possible.

Mr. BRACE: Will steps be taken to make known at once the opinion of experts as to the most suitable appliances without awaiting the decision of the Royal Commission?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I have already given instructions that inquiries shall be addressed to colliery owners with regard to organisation, so that as soon as the Commission make up their minds which is the best apparatus the organisation for its use may be well advanced.

Advisory Committee on Commercial Intelligence.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will enlarge the terms of reference to the Advisory Committee on Commercial Intelligence to cover questions relating to Colonial as well as Foreign tariffs; and whether he will in future submit all proposed changes in the tariffs of our Colonies to the Advisory Committee for consideration by them.

I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade was established to supply information, *inter alia*, upon matters relating to Foreign and Colonial tariffs, he will submit th new Canadian tariff to the Advisory Committee for consideration, and ask for their Report as to the general effect upon the trade of this country which might follow from the changes in the tariff rates and by the non-tariff provisions of the New Customs Bill of Canada.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The examination of Colonial tariffs is part of the duty of the Commercial Department of the Board of Trade, but I do not think that the suggested enlargement of the reference to the Advisory Committee is expedient. The Committee represents India and the Colonies as well as the United Kingdom, and is concerned with the effect of Foreign tariffs on the interests of various parts of the Empire. I am not sure that the Colonial representatives would approve of a change which would make it part of their duties to report on Colonial tariff proposals.

Imports of Agricultural Machinery at Hamburg.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that the total imports in 1905 of agricultural machinery into the free port of Hamburg were valued at £100 only; and whether, seeing that even if the whole of this importation were British it would not account for the want of agreement between British and German official figures as to the value of British agricultural machinery entering Germany, he will cause further inquiries to be made for the purpose of explaining the discrepancies pointed out.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. The figure he quotes is that of the value of agricultural machinery imported into Germany from the free port of Hamburg.

In reply to a further Question,

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said there was a vast difference between the figures for machinery imported into Hamburg for export into Germany and those imported for export elsewhere.

British Imports from Austria-Hungary.

MR. REMNANT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that, according to the Board of Trade Returns, the value of china and earthenware consigned from Austria-Hungary to the United Kingdom was £51,173 in 1904 and £17,194 in 1905, whereas according to the official Returns of the Austrian Government the exports to the United Kingdom of pottery, porcelain, etc., were £199,000 in 1904 and £279,000 in 1905; and whether he can explain the discrepancy in the magnitude and movement of these two sets of figures.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The figures are correctly quoted by the hon. Member from the official Returns. I am causing inquiry to be made as to the explanation of the discrepancy.

West Ham—Unemployed Women.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his Board has come to any decision upon the application of the West Ham Distress Committee for a grant on behalf of a scheme for setting unemployed women to work, which has been stated to be under consideration.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I have not seen my way to making any grant to the distress committee for this purpose.

MR. THORNE asked whether the right hon. Gentleman refused to find money for granting work to women who registered their names.

MR. JOHN BURNS: That is not so. The Local Government Board has granted money to three relief schemes for working women, one in St. Pancras, one in Camberwell, and one at Poplar. These three schemes are in process of experiment and are sufficiently supported by funds. I do not see my way to go further.

MR. THORNE said the West Ham Distress Committee had formulated a scheme for granting work to women if money was forthcoming for the purpose.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I considert hat on the whole West Ham has been treated liberally. It has one-hundredth part of the population and it has had one-seventh of the total money disbursed. It has a farm colony, large relief works, and a substantial grant towards emigration. For the moment I cannot see my way to grant any more.

Medical Officers of Health—Return.

*Sir J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will grant the Return relative to medical officers of health and inspectors of nuisances standing on to-day's Paper.†

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I shall be happy to give my hon. friend a Return as to the matters referred to under the headings (a) and (c) in his Motion. I have not the particulars referred to under (b). I will communicate with him on the subject of the Return before it is moved for.

Food and Meat Inspection.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Bill will contain any scheme for creating a uniform system of food and meat inspection throughout the whole of the London area.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: The Bill which is now before the House does not itself prescribe schemes. It enables regulations to be made by the Local Government Board for the prevention of danger to public health from the importation, preparation, storage, and distribution of food, and one of its objects is thereby to secure uniformity and efficiency of inspection in the case of particular foods or classes of foods for which control is necessary in the interests of public health, whether in London or elsewhere.

Metropolitan Mail-Van Drivers.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he has now completed his inquiry respecting the wages and conditions of service of the metropolitan mail van drivers; and whether he is in a position to state the decision at which he has arrived.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I was satisfied from the information supplied me by the Board of Trade and from elsewhere that the wages and conditions of service of the carmen in London, working under Post Office contracts, required revision. Owing, however, to the varying nature of carmen's work, it seemed impossible to assert that there was in London a definite "fair wage" recognised by employers and men. I therefore entered into negotiations with the contractors in London. These negotiations have resulted in an arrangement by which concurrently with certain modifications in the terms of the various mail cart contracts, the minimum wages that shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of the fair wages clause are to be as follows:—For single horse drivers 25s. a week; for pair horse drivers 27s. per week. In addition to the wage, complete uniform is to be provided, the prime cost of which amounts to over 1s. 3d. a week. The hours during which the carmen are to be on duty are not to exceed twelve a day, from yard to yard (or in certain exceptional cases seventy-two a week), beyond which overtime is to be paid. These conditions compare favourably with those of other employers, and show a considerable improvement on the conditions hitherto prevailing under the Post Office contracts. The new rates will come into force on the first of next month. I desire to place on record the reasonable and fair spirit in which the various contractors met my representative throughout the negotiations.

Australian Mail Service.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if the arrangements have been completed for the new Australian mail service; whether in future, as heretofore, it is intended that a weekly despatch of mails to Australia shall take place; and whether there is any discontinuance of the Australian mail service *via* San Francisco.

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† Return showing (a) the salaries of the Medical Officer of Health and Inspector of Nuisances employed by each of the Rural District Councils in any three English counties; (b) the last annual Return of the general expenses incurred by such Officers; (c) the number of cases in which a Rural District Council, in any of the three selected counties, has obtained, under the Local Government Act, 1888, from the County Council, out of the Exchequer Contribution Account, payment of half the salaries of their Medical Officer and their Inspector of Nusiances.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The present weekly service maintained by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company under contract with the Imperial Post Office and by the Orient Steam Navigation Company under contract with the Commonwealth Post Office in alternate weeks provides for the conveyance of mails under the existing conditions until the 31st of January, 1908. I am at present considering the arrangements to be made after that date in regard to the fortnightly service under my control. I understand that the Australian Government is desirous of maintaining an alternating service of its own; but I have no official information as to the action which is being taken by that Government. So far as correspondence for Australia is concerned the San Francisco route is used only at the request of the senders. I understand that one voyage included in the time table is to be omitted and that the service in the homeward direction is now somewhat irregular. The trans Pacific service is not under Imperial control.

The "People's Friend."

MR. WILKIE (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, seeing that such publications as the *People's Friend* cost when sent through the post one penny, although weighing under 2½ ounces, and that other publications, weighing up to three pounds, can pass through the Post Office for one halfpenny, he will take steps to have this difference of treatment removed.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The privilege of transmission at the newspaper rate of postage given by the Post Office Act, 1870, is not dependent upon the weight of a publication, but, primarily upon the nature of its contents. The publishers of the *People's Friend* with whom I have recently been in correspondence, inform me that they are unable to modify the character of the paper so as to bring it under the statutory definition of a "newspaper." Under these circumstances I have no power to admit it under the newspaper rate.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): In view of the great grievance felt by the working classes on this subject, will the right hon. Gentleman introduce the necessary legislation?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That would open up a very large question.

Post Office Telephone Wires.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a Post Office telephone wire has been taken across certain properties called Hylands and Hylands House, Epsom, without the consent of the occupiers or owners of the said properties; whether this was done with his authority; and, if not, whether he will take any, and what, steps to prevent the occurrence of similar trespasses in other parts of the country.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: There appears to have been some irregularity in the manner in which the wire in question was erected, and a meeting has been arranged between one of my officers and the occupier of Hylands House to discuss the matter. No general question arises such as to require action on my part.

Education Bill Grant of 1906.

SIR H. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the sum of £1,000,000 a year, provided for educational purposes under the Education Bill of 1906, will still be available for those purposes; and, if so, whether he will consider such application of the money in question as will secure that there shall be a public elementary school under popular control within reach of every child whose parents desire the same.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The additional grant of £1,000,000 included in the Bill of last session was necessitated to a considerable extent to meet the expenditure which would have been thrown on local authorities if the Bill had become law. As my hon. friend is aware, owing to circumstances which it is not in the power of this House to control, the law has remained unchanged, and I fear, therefore, I can hold out no hope that the additional grant will be available.

Education Department Staff.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what economies and reductions of *personnel* in the English section of the Education Department will result from the appointment of officials, not hitherto members of the Civil Service, to control public elementary education in Wales.

MR. McKENNA: The new officials will not control public elementary education, or any other form of education; they will carry out the administration and inspection of education of all grades in Wales under the control of the President of the Board of Education. I cannot yet say to what extent the three new appointments from outside may render possible a reduction of the staff of the Board of Education beyond that already announced.

Monitors in Elementary Schools.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the monitor system in elementary schools is encouraged by the Board; what arrangements the Board makes for aiding their instruction; and how many of them ultimately become pupil teachers.

MR. McKENNA: The Board offer no encouragement to the employment of monitors in public elementary schools, in view of the importance of postponing as long as possible any such interruption of the young person's general education as is entailed by monitorial duties. The Board do not, however, prohibit the employment of young persons, in certain circumstances, to assist the teachers in matters of class routine, other than teaching, especially in infant classes. I have no information as to the last paragraph of the Question.

Special Grants.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, if he can state the nature of the special grants to certain local education authorities, for which a decrease of £200,000 is estimated for under Class 4, 1, 2, c. 6.

MR. McKENNA: The grants in question were in aid of the expenditure of local education authorities which had been under the necessity of levying a rate for elementary education of 1s. 6d. in the £ or over in the year preceding the grant.

Provision for New Schools.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, if he will state by what method he proposes to allot the £100,000 for special provision for new schools entered in Estimates, Class 4, 1, 3, c. 6; and for what purpose is it provided.

MR. McKENNA: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has allowed £100,000 to be placed on the Estimates with a view to enabling the Board, as and when occasion requires and within the limits of this sum, to furnish the means for providing a public elementary school in cases where the only existing school accommodation is wholly of a denominational character and a strong demand is made by the parents for an undenominational school.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): And how many children will thus be accommodated?

MR. McKENNA: It is impossible to say.

Welsh Education Department and Education Trusts.

LORD EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, if the Welsh Department will administer charitable education trusts in Wales.

MR. McKENNA: As regards secondary education the Answer is in the affirmative. As regards elementary education it may be necessary to retain for a time the existing arrangements pending the concentration of all branches of the Board's work in the new building.

Cost of Primary Education.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he can state the exact amount required for primary education in England and Wales in the present Estimates.

MR. McKENNA: I am not sure what the hon. Member would include in primary education, and I must refer him to the Estimates themselves which are now published.

Election Expenditure.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether he proposes to bring in a Bill to amend the Corrupt Practices Act with regard to Parliamentary and municipal elections, so as to make it illegal for any outside persons spending money or incurring expenditure to promote the candidature of any person who is a candidate beyond the expenditure allowed by law to be expended by any candidate.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir John Walton, Leeds, S.): I have already said I hope to be able to bring in a Bill on this subject. It was, I think, the intention of Parliament to limit expenses during elections in the interests of candidates as well as with the object of securing the purity and simplicity of elections. That aim of the Corrupt Practices Act has not been fully realised.

Clifton Park Agricultural Experiments.

Sir J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board distributes information to landowners and farmers through the county councils as to new machines and processes, artificial manures and their results, dairy work and cheese-making, etc.; and whether the Board will in that or some other way bring to the notice of the agricultural classes the fact that at Clifton-on-Bowmont, near Kelso, in the county of Roxburgh, a demonstration farm has been established by a Scottish landowner, Mr. Robert H. Elliot, of Clifton Park, at his own expense and at all times open, to enable farmers to see in operation on the land itself the Clifton Park system of agriculture, especially the renovation of exhausted soils by the planting of certain roots and crops of a remunerative kind, without the use of artificial manures.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): The Answer to the first part of my hon. friend's Question is in the affirmative. The Board are fully acquainted with the interesting experiments carried on by Mr. Elliot at Clifton. He was good enough to prepare an article on the subject which we published in our *Journal* for December, 1901, and attention was also directed to his work in detail in an article by Professor Middleton on the "Formation of Permanent Pastures" which appeared in our *Journal* for November, 1905. Mr. Elliot's methods and the generosity and public spirit with which he has conducted his experiments and made them available for inspection by all who are interested are well-known in agricultural circles.

Gooseberry Cultivation.

Mr. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can supply any information of the total commercial value of the gooseberry crop of Great Britain; and could he confirm the estimate that the gooseberry crop of the Wisbeach district alone is worth an annual average value of about £20,000.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: There were over 80,000 acres under small fruit in Great Britain last year, of which 5,279 acres were in Cambridgeshire and 4,810 acres in Norfolk. We have, however, no information as to the acreage under particular descriptions of small fruit, and we cannot therefore test the accuracy of the estimate to which my hon. friend refers. We propose during the current year, to obtain more detailed statistics as to fruit culture in England, which is, I am glad to say, steadily increasing both in importance and extent.

Ecclesiastical Commission and Estate Leases.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the right hon. Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield, as representing the Church Estates Commission, whether he can say what was the total number of leases granted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners during 1906; and how many of these contained a prohibitive, and how many a restrictive, covenant with regard to the sale of beer, wine and spirits.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): The total number of leases granted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1906 was 625. It is and has been for over twenty years the practice of the Commissioners to insert in all building leases and leases of house property granted by them, covenants absolutely prohibiting the sale on the demised premises of beer, wine and spirits, except in cases of lettings expressly for hotels or licensed houses. The number of leases of licensed houses granted in 1906 was two, both of which were renewals of former leases.

Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Suppression of Licensed Houses.

MR. C. NICHOLSON: I beg to ask the right hon. Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield, as representing the Church Estates Commission, whether he will say what public-houses or beer-houses on the estates of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were suppressed or renewed during 1906; and of these how many were suppressed without compensation; and what is the number and the estimated capital value of the public-houses and beer-houses respectively now on the estates of the said Commissioners.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: In 1906 the number of public-houses of which the leases were renewed by the Commissioners was 2, the number of those of which the leases lapsed and of which the licences were allowed by the Commissioners to lapse at the same time (without compensation) was four. In some cases during the year notices have been received that the question of renewal has been referred to Quarter Sessions under the Act of 1904, but these cases, so far as I am aware, still await the decision of Quarter Sessions. The total number of public-houses on the Commissioners' estates is 332. The Commissioners have not the information necessary to enable me to answer the hon. Member's Question so far as it relates to beer-houses. These, however, are always suppressed voluntarily by the Commissioners so soon as the properties upon which they stand come into the possession of the Commissioners. I am unable to give any estimate of the capital value of the public-houses.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge): I beg to ask the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam Division, as representing the Church Estates Commission, whether he will say if the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are prepared to take into consideration the evils connected with the presence on licensed premises of children, and to make it a condition of their assent in future to the licensing of premises, other than residential hotels, on their estates that persons under fourteen years of age shall not be allowed thereon.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: The Ecclesiastical Commissioners regard the grave question of the presence of young people on licensed premises as one to be dealt with by general legislation, and not one in which any such action as the hon. Member suggests by them as ground landlords of some licensed houses could be in any degree effectual. If such conditions were inserted by the Commissioners in their leases they would have no means of ensuring the observance of them.

Crofter Commission.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been directed to the fact that the Crofters' Commission is largely in arrears with its work, especially in Orkney and Shetland; and if, in view of the Small Landholders Bill, he will take measures to expedite the hearing and settlement of all cases that are now pending, several for a number of years.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The information I have received is that the arrears to be dealt with by the Commission are not greater than at the close of recent years. The number of cases pending in Orkney and Shetland is forty-two and fifteen. After the publication of the Report now about to be issued the Commissioners will arrange to hear outstanding cases with all practicable speed.

Illegal Trawling in the Moray Firth.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the number of foreign trawlers prosecuted for trawling in the Moray Firth since the decision in the High Court of Justiciary, and the result of such prosecutions.

MR. SINCLAIR: Since the decision in the High Court of Justiciary, nine different men have been charged with twenty offences. In three cases the complaints were withdrawn *pro loco et* *tempore*; in the remaining cases convictions were obtained. The penalties in two cases were £75 or forty day's imprisonment, in the remainder £100 or sixty days for each offence.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: How many of these men were foreigners?

MR. SINCLAIR: I must ask for notice of that.

Tweed Fishery Prosecutions.

SIR J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the discontent produced by the number of arrests and prosecutions under the Tweed Fishery Laws has been brought to his notice, and if he can state the number of persons prosecuted in the counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk in the year 1906.

MR. SINCLAIR: The facts of this matter have been brought to my notice. The statistics are made up to 31st May in each year and the number of persons prosecuted in the counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk for the year ending 31st May, 1906, was 122. For the period from that date to 9th February, 1907, the number was 106.

Line Fishing in the Moray Firth.

MR. ANNAN BRYCE (Inverness Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that since the more strict enforcement of the regulations against trawling in the Moray Firth, there has been a marked improvement in the takes of the line fishermen; and whether the Fishery Board considers that the improvement in the take is due to the diminution of trawling.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am aware that the haddock fishing prosecuted from Fraserburgh to Wick during July and December last, yielded better results than those obtained during the corresponding period of 1905, but I am also informed there was a similar improvement in the case of the fishing prosecuted from several of the districts between Peterhead and Eyemouth. It would therefore be difficult to say whether this increased yield could be attributed directly to a diminution in trawling.

Island of Lewis—Sanitation.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that on page 56 of the last Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland it is stated that the present condition of affairs in the Island of Lewis cannot be allowed to continue, and that it is essential that there should be in the district a proper staff consisting of a medical officer of health and at least one sanitary inspector, giving their whole time to their duties; and, seeing that it is now nearly two years since the Local Government Board for Scotland received from their medical inspector, Dr. Dittmar, a Report calling attention to the deplorable sanitary condition of the townships in the island, will he state whether any application has yet been made to the Treasury for the funds requisite to deal with the question; and, if not, will he explain why this has not been done.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am well aware of the facts. The matter is under the serious consideration of all the departments concerned, but as my hon. friend knows, it is not a simple problem, and I am not at present able to make any statement.

Island of Lewis—Public Health Requirements.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state what sum falls to the share of Scotland under the General Aid Grant for the current year, and will he consider the expediency of applying a portion of that sum to the public health requirements in the Island of Lewis, especially bearing in mind that the last Report of the Local Government Board sets forth that the local authority express their inability to deal with the subject on account of the public health assessment for the island being already at its maximum.

MR. SINCLAIR: The amount of General Aid Grant for the financial year 1907–8 (including a re-vote of £75,000) is £305,618. The Minute providing for the distribution of the Grant will be laid on the Table of the House to-day. No portion will be specifically set aside to meet the public health requirements of the Island of Lewis, but it will be open to any School Board to apply its share of the Grant or any portion thereof to improving the health conditions of its schools.

Whale Fisheries Bill.

MR. SUTHERLAND: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether a Government Bill is to be introduced to regulate Whale Fisheries in Scotland, and, if so, when.

MR. SINCLAIR: It is my intention to introduce the Bill referred to and I hope to do so on an early date.

Highland Crofters.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland in view of the growing dissatisfaction in the Highland crofting counties at the delay in introducing a Bill to amend the Crofters' Act of 1886, will he consider the expediency of introducing before Easter a Bill to meet the requirements of the Highlands, leaving the rest of Scotland to be dealt with in a separate measure.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Bill will be introduced as soon as possible. The suggestion of my hon. friend was carefully considered and rejected last year; and there is no intention of departing from that decision.

Rosslare Telegraph Facilities.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that a cross-channel steamer service is now operating daily at the port of Rosslare, on the cost of Wexford, but that no telegraph office exists for the convenience of travellers and the general public; and will he direct that this want shall be immediately supplied.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Rosslare pier is only open to persons travelling by the steamers, and there is no case therefore for establishing a public (postal) telegraph office there. The Great Southern and Western Railway Company had at one time a public telegraph office at Rosslare Pier Station, and if they are willing to re-open it I shall certainly make no objection.

Postal Deliveries near the Rosslare Railway.

MR. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether inquiries have yet been made regarding a second delivery at the various villages through which the Rosslare Railway passes; and if he can say what is the decision arrived at.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The inquiries in the matter, which necessarily take some time owing to the extent of the district affected, are not yet completed, but I hope shortly to be able to effect some improvement in the postal service at some, at least, of the villages in question by making use of the railway, as suggested.

Greystones Harbour.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for East Wicklow, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware of the condition of Greystones harbour, and of the fact that, with a view to finding a remedy for it and some means of improving it, a local committee of representative men has been formed; that this committee has employed an engineer to make an estimate of the cost of improvement; that the committee asked the Board of Works to allow its engineer to see the original plans and sections of the harbour in order to facilitate him in his work; that the Board of Work have refused the committee's request; and will he see that the committee is facilitated in its work by the Board of Works or any other Irish department or board they may make any reasonable application to.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I understand the facts to have been correctly stated by the hon. Member. He has, however, omitted to mention that the Board of Works upon receiving the application inquired the purpose for which it was made and were informed that the committee wished its engineer "to prepare a scheme for the improvement of the harbour with a view to getting a free grant from the Government" and that it was to serve this end that the inspection of the plans was desired. As the decision of the Treasury not to make a grant had been announced in answer to a Question by the hon. Member of the 5th December last† the Board of Works thought that no useful purpose would be served by complying with the committee's request.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxvi., 969.

Law of Compensation for Malicious Injury.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware that in Ireland there exists a law under which a person alleged to have suffered from malicious injury may receive compensation from the ratepayers of the district; whether any such law exists in Great Britain; and, if not, whether he will consider the necessity of extending the Irish law to Great Britain.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): I am informed that the facts are as stated in the first part of the Question, and that no similar law exists in Great Britain. Nor do I see any occasion for extending it to this country, but if the hon. Member introduced a Bill for that purpose I have no doubt it would be fully considered.

MR. HAYDEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of extending the English law to Ireland?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There is no English law.

Small Holdings Bill.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the announcement that the Small Holdings Bill would be introduced in this House, he will state whether this Bill will be introduced before Easter, in order to give Members representing county divisions an opportunity for discussing its provisions with their constituents.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am afraid I cannot at the moment add anything to the Answer I have already given to my hon. friend the Member for the Rugby Division and my hon. friend the Member for the Reigate Division.

Police Reports to Irish Judges.

MR. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if his attention has been called to the fact that in Ireland the police authorities in each county furnish the going Judge of assize with a Report on the state of the county, and on offences other than those on the calendar for trial, and that it is the practice for the Judge to comment on these Reports; that no such practice, either in regard to the Judge or the police, obtains in Great Britain; and whether he will consider the advisability of extending the Irish practice to Great Britain, or the British practice to Ireland.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I think the Answer to this Question is practically the same as I gave just now to the hon. Member. The facts are as stated in the first part of the Question, and the practice referred to is not followed in this country. Nor do I see any advantage in obtaining its introduction here.

MR. HAYDEN: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will consider the advisability of assimilating the law in the two countries?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think that comes within my realm.

MR. HAYDEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman favourably consider a request for a Parliamentary return of Reports supplied by the police to Irish judges?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That Question should be addressed to the Irish Government.

The following Questions were asked on Thursday last:—

Canadian Wheat Exports.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, if he is aware that according to the Canadian Returns the exports of Canadian wheat to the United Kingdom amounted to 11,280,000 bushels in the twelve months ending 30th June, 1905, and to 36,028,000 bushels in the twelve months ending 30th June, 1906, and of flour 593,000 barrels, or 1,037,000 cwt. and 944,000 barrels, or 1,652,000 cwt. in the same time, whereas, according to the monthly Returns issued by the Board of Trade, the imports from Canada in the same periods amounted to 8,142,000 bushels and 19,708,000 bushels, respectively (assuming 60 lbs. to the bushel), and of flour 1,607,000 cwt. and 1,736,000 cwt. respectively; and whether he can explain the difference in these two sets of figures.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The differences between the figures alluded to by the hon. Member arise mainly from the fact that the figures given in the monthly accounts relating to trade and navigation with regard to imports of wheat and flour from Canada and the United States of America, classify such imports (except in cases where the official documents enable a distinction to be drawn between Canadian and United States produce) according to the country from which the produce was shipped direct to the United Kingdom. A certain amount of United States produce shipped *via* Canadian ports is accordingly classified as Canadian and *vice versa*.

Mr. REMNANT: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not base his figures on the Canadian Return when he stated that 92 per cent. of the wheat supply of Canada came to this country, whereas if he had relied on the British Blue-book it would have been only 50 per cent.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes, I think I did quote from the Canadian book in that particular.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Can the right hon. Gentleman give the House any indication as to future business?

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that on the following day the Reports of Civil Service and Army Supplementary Estimates would be taken, and Committee of Ways and Means set up. On Wednesday the Report of the Civil Services Vote on account would be taken, and on Thursday the Report of the Army and Navy Votes, the Report of the Ways and Means Committee (after eleven o'clock), and the introduction of the Army Annual and Consolidated Fund Bills. Either on Tuesday or Thursday, if time permitted, they might take other Army or Navy Votes.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

John Henry Whitley, esquire, for the Borough of Halifax.

NEW BILL.

VALUATION (IRELAND) BILL.

"To effect an equitable administration of any new general Valuation in Ireland," presented by Mr. James O'Connor; supported by Mr. Field, Mr. Ffrench, and Mr. O'Malley; to be read a second time upon Friday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 101.]

SUPPLY [3rd Allotted Day].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1907–8 (Vote on Account).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £21,410,000, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, viz.:—

CIVIL SERVICES.

	£
Class II.	
Colonial Office - - -	25,000
Class IV.	
Scientific Investigation, etc.	24,000
Board of Education - -	7,000,000
Class I.	
Royal Palaces - - -	20,000
Osborne - - - - -	5,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens - - - -	50,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings - - - - -	20,000
Salisbury Memorial - -	—
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Great Britain - -	30,000

	£
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain - - -	25,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings - - -	50,000
Revenue Buildings - -	210,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain - - - -	200,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom - - -	90,000
Harbours under the Board of Trade - - -	15,000
Peterhead Harbour - -	10,000
Rates on Government Property - - -	290,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland - - - -	95,000
Railways, Ireland - -	35,000

CLASS II.

United Kingdom and England :—

House of Lords Offices -	10,000
House of Commons Offices -	20,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments - - -	40,000
Home Office - - -	70,000
Foreign Office - - -	24,000
Privy Council Office - -	5,000
Board of Trade - - -	90,000
Mercantile Marine Services -	32,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade - -	500
Board of Agriculture and Fisheries - - -	60,000
Charity Commission - -	15,000
Civil Service Commission -	17,000
Exchequer and Audit Department - - -	25,000
Friendly Societies Registry -	3,000
Local Government Board -	85,000
Lunacy Commission - -	5,000
Mint (including Coinage) -	5
National Debt Office - -	6,000
Public Record Office - -	10,000
Public Works Loan Commission - - - -	500
Registrar General's Office -	15,000
Stationery and Printing -	330,000
Woods, Forests, &c., Office of	8,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of - - - -	34,000
Secret Service - - -	40,000

Scotland :—

	£
Secretary for Scotland, Office of - - - - -	25,000
Fishery Board - - -	5,000
Lunacy Commission - -	2,500
Registrar General's Office -	1,500
Local Government Board -	5,000

Ireland :—

Lord - Lieutenant's Household - - - -	2,000
Chief Secretary's Offices and Subordinate Departments	10,000
Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction	90,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office - -	1,000
Local Government Board -	30,000
Public Record Office - -	2,000
Public Works Office - -	16,000
Registrar General's Office -	5,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey - - - -	7,000

CLASS III.

United Kingdom and England :—

Law Charges - - -	30,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses - - - -	28,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	140,000
Land Registry - - -	16,000
County Courts - - -	2
Police, England and Wales -	15,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies - - -	320,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain -	130,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum - - - -	12,000

Scotland :—

Law Charges and Courts of Law - - - -	30,000
Register House, Edinburgh	15,000
Crofters Commission - -	2,000
Prisons - - - -	35,000

Ireland :—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions - - -	25,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments - - -	43,000
Land Commission - -	100,000
County Court Officers, &c.	45,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police	60,000
Royal Irish Constabulary	600,000
Prisons - - - -	52,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools - - - -	55,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum - - - -	4,000

CLASS IV.	
United Kingdom and England :—	£
British Museum	60,000
National Gallery	10,000
National Portrait Gallery	3,000
Wallace Collection	3,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	60,000
Scotland :—	
Public Education	850,000
National Galleries	3,000
Ireland :—	
Public Education	760,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners	400
National Gallery	2,000
Queen's Colleges	2,500
CLASS V.	
Diplomatic and Consular Services	250,000
Colonial Services	350,000
Telegraph Subsidies and Pacific Cable	25,000
Cyprus (Grant in Aid)	49,000
CLASS VI.	
Superannuation and Retired Allowances	300,000
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances	1,150
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland	17,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiencies	—
CLASS VII.	
Temporary Commissions	28,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	7,943
Repayment to the Local Loans Fund	—
Ireland Development Grant	100,000
Total for Civil Services	£13,980,000
REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.	
Customs	350,000
Inland Revenue	830,000
Post Office	6,250,000
Total for Revenue Departments	£7,430,000
Grand Total	£21,410,000

*MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): There is one matter which I hope will not be deemed to be controversial and upon which I desire, if possible, to obtain some information from the Government: I refer to the organisation of what has hitherto been called the Colonial Conference. I hope this question is not of a controversial character. Two years ago on behalf of the late Government I wrote a despatch in which certain propositions were made to the self-governing Colonies for the further regulating of the Colonial Conference. The first suggestion was that the Conference should henceforward be called the Imperial Council, or, as I should now desire, the Imperial Conference. The second was that there should be set up a committee or a commission containing representatives of both the mother and daughter States, who, in the intervals between the successive meetings of the Conference, should confer together upon the questions to be submitted to the Conference, digest them, and present them for discussion in the most concise and businesslike way possible. It was felt that the Colonial Premiers, at all times busy men, when they came here would not have a very long time in which to dispose of their wide and complicated business. They would have to meet also a storm of hospitality. The late Government, therefore, made these proposals, but I need hardly say they were made in full view of the root principle, which has, I think, been firmly established, that the footing of the parties at the Conference shall be that of a mother State meeting daughter States on an equality. That principle, of which I have been an advocate two or three years, received immense authority the other day by the speech of my right hon. friend on the subject of defence. The proposals in the despatch to which I have referred did not in any way exclude the question of commercial preference; the better organisation of the Conference was not, in my mind, in any degree a substitute for commercial preference, but, if anything, an assistance to it. The response of the self-governing Colonies has on the whole been extremely favourable. Australia, New Zealand, the Cape, Natal, all in different ways met the proposal with great cordiality. So strong has been their representation, indeed, that the Colonial Secretary has put down as the first subject for discussion at the Colonial Conference next month the constitution of the Conference and the ancillary machinery whereby its proceedings may be made more businesslike and effective. I believe that my proposals were received with substantial favour by many hon. Gentlemen opposite, as well as by my friends on this side. I had expressed a doubt myself whether it would be wise or necessary, by any instruction to the Conference, to define more closely its constitution, or to attempt to delimit its functions, for a study of Anglo-Saxon institutions seems to show that an institution may often wisely be left to develop in accordance with circumstances, and that it is well not to sacrifice elasticity and the power of adaptation to a premature definiteness of form. I still hold that opinion strongly, and I think the Committee will see that the proposals that have been made do not conflict with that opinion. I ought to mention that the answer of Canada was not so cordial in her acceptance of the proposal, but I think the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean exaggerated the case when he said that Canada was hostile. Although Canada showed some misgivings on the subject, she, at any rate, took up the position that she was fully prepared to discuss the question at the Conference, and desired that it should be so discussed. I confess I was surprised to find how the Colonial Secretary in a short despatch to the Colonies, on 22nd February last year, had expressed himself in relation to this proposal. He said—

> "My predecessor committed to your Government, in his despatch of 7th December last, the Parliamentary Paper containing the correspondence with various Colonial Governments arising out of his despatch of 20th April which dealt with certain proposals respecting the organisation of future Colonial Conferences. I do not feel myself called upon to adopt the recommendation of those proposals; but in view of the expressions of opinion received from the Colonies I think that it will be desirable that the scheme should be freely discussed when the Conference meets."

Well we all hope that it will be freely discussed. If that were intended as a mere declaration of neutrality on the part of the Colonial Secretary or that in that state of circumstances the noble Lord did not want to give himself away, no one would have any right to complain; but, like other despatches

from the Colonial Office which have given offence, it was couched in a peculiarly unfortunate and ungracious form because it conveyed the impression that the Colonial Secretary was against these proposals, though they were approved by four out of five of the Colonies themselves. So much for that question. I will now turn to the subject of South Africa. As the Committee knows, the new Transvaal Assembly contains a large majority of Boer representatives over all the other Parties. The only comment I will make on that state of things is to repeat the hope I have on two previous occasions expressed in regard to the general policy of the granting of self-government to the Transvaal at this time, which is that the misgivings that are felt will not be realised. But I must point out that, from the information received, many of the hopes and beliefs of the Government in regard to the Transvaal have not been well founded or well considered. They hoped and believed that there would be an even balance of Parties; that a coalition Government would be formed and that Sir Richard Solomon might be Prime Minister; that the first action of the enfranchised community would be to sweep the Chinese out of the country if the coolies had not already availed of the invitation of his Majesty's Government to repatriate themselves at the expense of the State. What has happened? The Committee knows very well the facts.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Yes, it does.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: There is not a balance of Parties. The Boers are in a large majority; General Botha, and not Sir Richard Solomon, is Prime Minister; those manacled slaves, the Chinese, have responded only to the extent of one and a fraction per cent. to the invitation to repatriate themselves, and all political Parties in the Transvaal have unanimously adopted the position that was taken up by the late Government that the Chinese should be kept only as long as was necessary, and no longer, in the event of native labour being able to replace them. Let me give a warning to the Government and to hon. Members behind them who take a sincere interest in this question with reference to humanity. On looking through the new Blue-book I find that while the death-rate from disease among the Chinese employed in the mines amounts to only 11 per 1,000, the death-rate among the natives who labour in the mines is 37 per 1,000. I do not think that any candid man or any man of common sense can say from a consideration of those figures that the Chinese coolies have been ill-used. I have no objection to—indeed I strongly advocate—the employment of natives, provided they are of sufficient stamina. But I repeat my warning to the Government and to those of their supporters who take a keen interest in the subject from the humanitarian point of view not to take upon themselves the responsibility of unduly pressing the Transvaal Government to bring in natives who die at more than three times the rate of the Chinese, especially as the Chinese are accustomed to working in the mines and are so satisfied with their lot that they refuse to return home at other people's expense.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) said that the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the death-rate of the Chinese coolies in the mines was very much less than that of the native labourers; but was the right hon. Gentleman not aware that the death-rate of the natives in the Kimberley mines was much less than that of those in the Rand mines, and that that was attributed to the bad treatment the natives had suffered in the latter mines?

*MR. LYTTELTON: I do not know the circumstances and I do not believe it. If it is attributed to the bad treatment of the natives it is falsely attributed. I have before me the Blue-book in which the official testimony distinctly denies that conclusion. I think that the interruption of the hon. Gentleman shows the hostile feeling and foolish and illiberal prejudices which many people have against the managers of the mining industry on the Rand. I wish in this Convention to bring one or two matters before the Committee which I am bound to say seriously affect the credit of the Government. Five years ago the Native Labour Association was established for the purpose of recruiting natives in South Africa. Before that time private recruiting and with it great abuses prevailed, but since the institution of the Native Labour Association these abuses have ceased. Recently appeared a Mr. J. B. Robinson, the chief of a great mining group in the Transvaal. I have no knowledge of that gentleman, except that he seems to be a person of astuteness, for he has got the best of the Government in a transaction in which they performed a not very distinguished part. This Government and their supporters who proclaim themselves anti-capitalists, enthusiasts for equality of opportunity, and who number among themselves just a few humdrum lovers of fair play, have given to this Mr. J. B. Robinson a monopoly, a perfectly unjustifiable preference in the recruiting of natives in Mozambique. Mr. Robinson was a member of the Native Labour Association for five years and derived great advantages from it—an association which, of course, depends for success upon agreement between its members, for the large mine-owner might otherwise undercut, and so starve the small mine-owner. Then this austere, impartial Government gave to Mr. Robinson a licence to recruit in Portuguese territory, but they refused licences to others without inquiry, the result being that this particular capitalist had and would for months have the opportunity of organising a supply of competitive native labour against, not only his equals in the mining industry, but against humbler mine-owners for whom he will make the obtaining of recruits impossible. What is the reason for this? It cannot be a reason founded on substance, because two parties who might be said to be independent in this matter—the Portuguese Government, through the Acting Governor of Mozambique, and Sir Godfrey Lagden, a name honoured in native administration all over South Africa—have expressed opinions against this competition for native labour, and have favoured the policy of action by one powerful organisation amenable to regulations. The Governor General of Mozambique said—

"It is not the desire of this Government to encourage in any way the different groups of mines to initiate either competitive recruiting or free recruiting, since it is apparent that in the actual circumstances this would result in certain inconveniences without any assurance of obtaining the result which is pretended of an annual increase in the number of natives recruited."

In a recent Blue-book which is not before the House Sir Godfrey Lagden said—

> "I adhere firmly to that view to-day and shall regret, as I believe the country will have cause to regret, if there is any return to the order of recruiting which prevailed before the war."

The Portugese Government, but for the persuasion of the Foreign Office, would not have entertained the proposal. Mr. Robinson held out in a nebulous sort of way, which appears to have allured the Under-Secretary, some indication that he would make a white labour experiment, which every one with real knowledge of the Transvaal knows to be nonsense. How far has the Government been gulled and hoodwinked by Mr. Robinson? Do they really think he will make the white labour experiment? Perhaps they are wiser now, after Mr. Robinson has made his recent reply to the deputation of the unemployed. He said—

> "Native labour is plentiful and you can take it from me that as soon as we obtain that labour—and it will be obtained very shortly—we shall be able to find you employment of course on the same lines as other mines are worked."

Challenged specifically by a member of the deputation he said they must obtain the natives to work the mines, otherwise he would be unable to employ white men. Farther than that he could not go. The summary of the business is that the Government have given an unfair preference to Mr. Robinson in order to re-establish a system condemned by the greatest authorities in South Africa, colourably with a view to making an experiment in white labour which he has entirely disavowed, and while he still retains some 1,500 Chinese labourers in his mines. The Government appear to have done an extremely foolish thing, and, more than that, an unfair thing. There must be something in the Native Labour Association which has moved the ire of His Majesty's Government, or at any rate of the Under-Secretary. In a speech on a subject with which the Association has little in common—he was talking of the Orange River Colony—the Under-Secretary said the association had a sinister and tremendous influence through the Press and the Chamber of Mines.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N. W.): The speech was made in reply to the right hon. Gentleman when he specifically challenged the policy of the Government.

*MR. LYTTELTON: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct; I was mistaking the occasion, which, however, is not so important as the language used, the gist of which was that the association gerrymandered the supply of native labour with a view to swaying public opinion. The speech containing the charge was cabled to the Transvaal at public expense. I do not believe that Lord Elgin has read this part of the speech, and I do not think that, if he had seen it, he would have consented to its being sent. Lord Harris, in the other House, raised the question and directly challenged Lord Elgin to produce a shred of evidence in support of the charge. Not only did Lord Elgin produce no evidence, but honourable man as he is he distinctly stated that he imputed no malpractices of any kind to the association. On two separate occasions I put questions to the Under-Secretary, giving the hon. Gentleman the opportunity of withdrawing or of justifying his statement; but the reply the Under-Secretary was pleased to give was that I must do my best to reconcile his statements with those of his official chief. But the hon. Gentleman will permit me to say that that is not my business. It is the duty of the Under-Secretary, not only towards his chief but to the House and to the public, to justify the making of His Majesty's representative in the Transvaal the conduit-pipe for an unfounded, a defamatory, accusation. How can the Under-Secretary reconcile his statements with those of Lord Elgin in this matter? I can assure the hon. Gentleman, and I think I can venture to advise him, that nobody would think the worse of him if, his statement being now proved to be untrue, he said so and expressed regret not only that he spoke the words but that they had been conveyed in this formal manner to the public. I have only one more matter to mention, but that is a matter of very great importance. I refer to the Convention with regard to the New Hebrides. The hon. Gentleman, who usually defends his office with ability and capacity, adduced hardly any argument in favour of the action of the Government in this affair, except to express his regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition should have gone to the Antipodes for an argument. That seems to me a rather strange objection to come from a Colonial Under-Secretary whose business it is to deal with these particular matters. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs followed and made a few observations. I will not repeat in more than the most summary form what he said. I will not go into the clumsy and inconsiderate way in which this convention was pushed through; no attempt was made to justify it. But I will repeat in a succinct form what I said would be the effect of the native labour portion of the New Hebrides Convention. I said the effect of it would be that a child, provided he or she was sufficiently tall, might be taken for three years beyond the jurisdiction of the English flag, and that the employer of the child, when he or she had arrived there, would have a perfect right to employ that child from sunrise to sunset, at a rate which might be below 10s. a month, and the child would have no British protection so far as his or her employment was concerned, and that no provision was made for him or her to be under any inspection during the time that he or she was employed. Unmarried girls could be taken with the consent of the chief of the tribe and married women with the consent of their husbands. That is what would be the effect of this Convention, and I do not think the the Foreign Secretary or anybody on that side of the House would profess to like that. First it was said there was a co-dominion, and that the French must take the blame for this.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I never put it in that way. I did not for a moment say that the French ought to take any blame in the matter and that we were not to bear our share.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I am perfectly certain there are Members, even if the right hon. Gentleman is not among them, who stated that it was not our fault, because we were not acting singly. Of course I accept absolutely what the right hon. Gentleman says, and I am certain he intended to convey that which he has just now conveyed. But is there any blame to be attached to France in the matter at all? From an answer given to me by the Foreign Secretary it turns out that not only had no objection been taken by France to the objections put forward by the Colony to the Labour Regulations, but France had never even seen those objections. I think those Members who wish to shelter themselves behind the French Government in this matter must consider how unfair it is to shelter themselves behind a Power which had never seen the objections which our own Colony had raised in the matter. One plea raised by the Foreign Secretary was that this was no-man's land, and I think he said it was the first attempt to introduce a better state of things. The right hon. Gentleman could not have been aware of the facts when he said that, because it is not the first attempt at all. In 1880 and for many years afterwards the Queensland Ordinance was in force there. That is the only British Ordinance that has been put into force at all, and it ought to have been the starting point of this Ordinance. Neither is it the case, as the right hon. Gentleman also said, that at any rate in this no-man's land some system was better than nothing. I admit that for some time the Queensland law was not in force, but obviously the point from which the Government should have started was the point at which Queensland left it. If the Government had looked back to the history of this matter they would have seen that so far from this being the first and a better system than that which had existed before, it was a worse system. If the right hon. Gentleman will look back to the Queensland law he will find there that from the beginning right up to the end of the employment a most vigilant Government inspection was prescribed. That is the reason, no doubt, why the New Zealand Government wrote to Lord Elgin and pointed out that that was the system that ought to obtain. But Lord Elgin has not yielded to their pressure. There was inspection provided not only when recruiting but throughout the voyage from the islands to Queensland. A Government inspector had to go on board the ships and see that the sanitation and the capacity of the ship was all it should be and explain that he had seen for himself that everything was right. Then thoughout the whole period of indenture there was inspection in order to insure that the coolies should be kept out of harm. Here we have agreed a Convention for the New Hebrides in which we have a provision that provides that where they are sufficiently tall children may be recruited. It would be impossible to get rid of that by a regulation. Is that an advance on the previous state of things? Will the Foreign Secretary say that that is a better state of things than prevailed in the past?

MR. CHURCHILL: There was no regulation at all.

*MR. LYTTELTON: The regulation of the Queensland law, from which this ought to be an advance, is that no one less than sixteen years of age should be recruited. I hope the Government may be able to alter this, and I have no doubt the Foreign Secretary wishes to alter it. I cannot think the right hon. Gentleman or those who sit with him would wish that children, even if they are tall enough, should be recruited for the mines of New Caledonia. I say again that the Government who put such an Ordinance into circulation have a duty to act for and protect those who work under it. The right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary dealt with this question as if it were a question, among other things, of his own consistency. If I may say so with great respect, my object in bringing the matter before the House is not to convict the right hon. Gentleman of inconsistency, which is not a matter to me of importance. I say plainly that I am here to impeach the sincerity of the Party opposite. I will take the right hon. Gentleman's arguments, because I am perfectly certain that no hon. Gentleman opposite can give better arguments than the Foreign Secretary for his own consistency, and therefore, for their sincerity. What did he say? He said that this New Hebrides Convention was not comparable with the Chinese Ordinance in any way, and then he gave his reasons. He said the New Hebrides Convention did not put the natives into compounds. Is that a serious ground of differentiation; is the placing of natives in compounds a test of servility with hon. Gentlemen opposite? Is that seriously said? Because my answer to that is very simple. Men should have tender consciences, but it is very agreeable to have discriminating consciences. For some thirty years hon. Gentlemen opposite have without the slightest protest, and without the faintest uneasiness, permitted a compound system to obtain at Kimberley incomparably more rigorous than that in the Transvaal gold mines. At any rate the Transvaal natives to the number of thousands go every year into these Kimberley compounds, and yet hon. Gentlemen who are aroused to such transports of indignation against us with respect to the compound system, have never uttered a whisper to this House about what is going on. That is the first argument of the Foreign Secretary. The second argument was that there was no domestic life in the Transvaal compounds. There was a provision in the Chinese Ordinance, as hon. Members know, that wives and families might be brought at the expense of the employers, and I very much regret that the coolies did not avail themselves of it; at any rate, if that is a difference, it is a difference in favour of the Chinese Ordinance and against the New Hebrides Ordinance, which makes absolutely no provision of any kind for taking women and children. As a matter of fact the only provision it makes is that they may go as labourers, even the children, if they are not too little. Lastly, the right hon. Gentleman defended himself by saying that he objected to the repatriation provision of the Chinese Ordinance, because it did not allow the Chinese to pass into the life of citzenship in the places to which they were sent. I will not discuss the matter over again. I hold entirely the view I expressed before, that repatriation was compulsory in the case of the New Hebrides Ordinance. But has the right hon. Gentleman made any communication at all with the authorities at Fiji on this subject, or with the authorities of New Caledonia? The Under-Secretary says "No."

MR. CHURCHILL: I never said anything of the kind.

*MR. LYTTELTON: The question was not addressed to the hon. Gentleman, and the right hon. Gentleman is unable to answer.

SIR EDWARD GREY: There is a complete answer, but it is impossible to carry on a debate in this way.

*MR. LYTTELTON: What I say is this, that you ought to be able to answer "yes" or "no," as to whether communications have been made with the Governors or Governments of those countries to whom you propose to send these labourers. You ought to be able to say that at any rate, and you cannot. I, therefore, assume that you are not able to say that you have made arrangements with those countries with regard to repatriation. If that be so, do you really propose, without any law regulating them, to make citizens of those whom you described, a few weeks ago, as cannibals and savages? Do you propose, simply because these poor cannibals and savages wish to remain in Fiji, that they are to remain, although you have made no provision by consulting with the Governor of Fiji for that purpose, and although so far as I know—you have refused the Papers—you have made no communication with New Caledonia? They may have their view as to whether they desire cannibals and savages to remain among them, but I think everybody will say that they had a right to be consulted. That, I think, disposes of all the Foreign Secretary's distinctions between this New Hebrides Convention and the Ordinance which was passed in regard to South Africa. The point that I make for myself, and I believe on behalf of my friends, is whether or not you were wrong when you entered into the Convention. It is a matter of importance to the country and to everybody to know what they are to believe is genuinely the opinion and conviction of those who govern them. If thousands and thousands of votes have been obtained by the expression of passionate convictions that we were setting up in South Africa a system of slavery or a servile condition of labour, then let me tell the Under-Secretary that it is for him, and not for me, to reconcile the expression of those passionate convictions with the provisions of this Convention and his defence of them on the floor of this House.

*MR. CHURCHILL: The right hon. Gentleman always speaks with information and with moderation upon Colonial subjects, and it was, therefore, with very serious feelings that I observed him rise to oppose the Vote on account this afternoon, and to deliver an attack on the policy of the Government. But those apprehensions have been completely removed during the course of the speech to which we have had the opportunity of listening. That speech was from beginning to end a querulous oration. It was not an attack, it was a lament—a lament that the Colonial Office under the present Government does not live up to the high position which the right hon. Gentleman inaugurated in the days of the Pearl Fisheries, in the days of the Tanjong Pagar award, in the days of the Transvaal Representative Constitution, and, above all, in the high and far off times of the Chinese Labour Ordinance. The right hon. Gentleman has directed his complaints to three specific points. First, he has complained of what we have done with regard to the constitution of the Colonial Conference. He was very unhappy about the sad case of Mr. Robinson, and his indignation could scarcely be contained when he dealt with the Labour Ordinance in the New Hebrides. With the indulgence of the Committee, I shall endeavour to deal *seriatim* with these points.

First, let us take the question of the Colonial Conference. It is quite true that the right hon. Gentleman made certain proposals to the great Colonies of the Empire, with regard to an alteration in the name and constitution of the Colonial Conference. Those proposals were on the whole well received, but as he has said himself, they were less well received in Canada than in the other great Colonies. The reception, to quote his own words, was less cordial. I do not quarrel with that definition, although personally I think my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean was more accurate when he said that the reception was hostile. His Majesty's Government do not wish lightly to abandon a proposal which has been the object of anxious care on the part of the right hon. Gentleman and his friends; but really he has left us very little choice in the matter, because I observe that on the 29th November, 1905, he telegraphed to the Governors of the self-governing Colonies upon this very subject, explaining what the position was after consulting the Colonial

Governments; and this was what the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "In deference to the views expressed by the Government of the Dominion of Canada it seems to be desirable to postpone further discussion of these matters until the meeting of the next Conference."

Well, really it appears to me that the right hon. Gentleman must have forgotten that he is responsible for those words when he complains of the Government's having adopted the very course on which he himself decided.

MR. LYTTELTON said he was afraid the hon. Gentleman had misunderstood him. He certainly did not object to that part of Lord Elgin's despatch which postponed discussion until the Conference. What he objected to was the phrase which everybody who was not acquainted with the Colonial Office would take to mean the condemnation of those proposals before they got there.

*MR. CHURCHILL: We neither accept nor dismiss those proposals. My noble friend has determined that the constitution of the future Conferences must be a matter for the Conference itself to decide. Whether it is to be called the Imperial Conference or the Colonial Conference—I think there is a great deal to be said for the expression "Imperial Conference"—and what its constitution is to be, in every respect, are the first matters of grave importance which will be brought before the Conference. I do not think any advantage would be gained if we were at the present time to try to prejudge what the result of the Conference will be, or to anticipate its results. I think there are lines, however, on which we may usefully make some advance. Whether we accept the whole of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman or not, or whether we make ourselves responsible for them, is still an open matter, but in saying that the question must remain open until the Conference has assembled, we do not come under any impeachment from the right hon. Gentleman, because he, and he alone, above all others, is responsible for inaugurating and deciding upon that policy.

The second point with which I will deal has reference to the New Hebrides Convention. The Committee need be under no illusions about the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman towards

the New Hebrides Convention. His position is this, as I take it—I have no desire to make any assertion which he would resent, but I desire to encourage candour in Parliamentary discussion—he thinks he was treated unfairly over Chinese labour, and he is now taking his revenge by treating us unfairly. That is frankly the attitude assumed by the right hon. Gentleman. That attitude has been adopted with exactness this afternoon. All the provisions of this Convention have been misrepresented—I use the word in no discourteous sense. They have been misrepresented amiably by the right hon. Gentleman, and they have been malevolently misrepresented by some of his supporters in the country. A regulation is made which says a woman shall not be allowed to indenture herself for service without the consent of the head of the tribe. We are told that is worse than having no such protection as the consent of the head of the tribe affords. A regulation has been instituted that no young person shall be indentured who has not reached a certain standard, not yet fixed, of height. We are told that is worse than if persons could be recruited without any reference to the height which they have attained. A regulation is framed that the wages which shall be paid shall not be less than 10s. a month.

MR. LYTTELTON: No, it does not, "unless an agreement is made under the Convention."

*MR. CHURCHILL: The wages shall not be less than so much with a view to securing a minimum standard unless an agreement is made. We are told it would be much better if no such regulation had been made. Regulations are made that a man shall not be worked during the hours of the night, and the dark hours are excluded by the Convention from the hours of work. We are told, thereupon, that all that is not specifically excluded may be the regular hours during which a man may be employed, and that the labourers are worse off when there is a regulation that they shall not work at night than they would be if there was no regulation in force at all. I think myself that these regulations are primitive regulations. When the Colonial Premiers from Australia and New Zealand come over here we shall consult them upon the subject. [OPPOSITION laughter.] I do not know why consultation with the Colonial Prime Ministers should provoke the hilarity of hon. Gentlemen opposite, though I admit they have always shown great contempt for Colonial opinion when it has been against them. After consultation we shall proceed to draw up local regulations which will give effect to the general provisions of this Convention.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Will they apply to New Caledonia?

*MR. CHURCHILL: The regulations of this Convention will not apply to any country not covered by the jurisdiction of the Convention. When the right hon. Gentleman speaks with so much indignation, with a lump in his throat, of this New Hebrides Ordinance, let him reflect how the argument may be turned against himself. For two years he was Secretary of State for the Colonies. What were the conditions of labour in the New Hebrides during that time? There were absolutely no regulations. Women could be engaged without the consent of the head of their tribe.

MR. LYTTELTON: By whom?

*MR. CHURCHILL; By inhabitants of the New Hebrides. [OPPOSITION cries of "Not indentured."] I think it would be better if I were allowed to proceed. The women could be engaged without this precaution, and children could be engaged without even a standard of height, which is the one security you have got against persons of improper age being apprenticed. There were no restrictions as to the hours of labour or as to the wages to be paid. And yet the right hon. Gentleman sat quite quiet, calm, and perfectly contented with the utterly unregulated state of labour prevailing in the New Hebrides. The right hon. Gentleman says he had the Queensland Ordinance to nourish himself upon. I say not a word against the Queensland Ordinance, but it did not apply to the New Hebrides. [Interruption.] Nothing of the sort. The Queensland Ordinance only applied to those labourers of the New Hebrides who enlisted for service in Queensland. Outside that limitation the Queensland Ordinance had no effect at all; over the whole of the foreign population, over the British subjects who wished to engage native labour for purposes other than service in Queensland, over the whole French population—two-thirds of the whole population in the islands—the Queensland Ordinance had no validity whatever. For the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Queensland Ordinance prevailed in the New Hebrides before this Convention was instituted is to give a totally wrong impression of the facts, to which one in his high position in official life, and with the special advantages of access to information which he had enjoyed as the head of the Colonial Office ought not, I think, even for a Party advantage, to have descended.

The right hon. Gentleman says that under the Convention that we have concluded with the Government of France there will be compulsory repatriation, and that that is a marked instance of our inconsistency and insincerity, having regard to all that we said about South Africa. Let us look into that. I take first the question whether this Ordinance enforces compulsory repatriation within the group. The right hon. Gentleman is a lawyer. He has been for a time a Cabinet Minister, but he has always been a lawyer. Therefore I bow to his opinion on a matter of law. I would not for one moment put my opinion against his on a matter of law. But, after all, the Government has the advantage of high legal advice. We have taken the trouble to obtain the opinion of the law officers of the Crown upon this Convention, and I have the authority of the law officers of the Crown, who, after all, are members of a great learned profession who criticise without regard to political opinion—I have their opinion formally given that nothing in this Convention, in the jurisdiction and scope of the Convention enforces compulsory repatriation unless the labourer himself claims it of the employer. That is the law. I cannot presume in this battle of legal giants to interfere, being a plain man. But as the right hon. Gentleman has put forward his opinion on the subject he has to combat the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. Having said that, I frankly admit that the framers of the New Hebrides Convention did not consider at all this particular question of compulsory repatriation, and no wonder. It never entered into the head of any person connected with the New Hebrides Convention that such a point was of any significance considering the conditions. I am now dealing with the conditions within the group; within the area of the Convention. Here are islands twenty, thirty, and forty miles apart, and there is no law restraining a native of one island from entering another; no provision which prevents his coming in, on indenture or out of indenture, to remain in, or to remain outside. The natives may circulate with perfect freedom in that group, so far as the passions of the different tribes in the different islands will permit them; and there is absolutely no provision or beginning of a provision such as exists in South Africa to-day which says a man shall not enter except under particular indentures and particular restrictions injurious and derogatory to his liberty and *status.* None whatever. One more point about the repatriation of these labourers in the New Hebrides group is that you shall make sure when a man has been engaged and has done his work, and wishes to go back to his own island, that the employer shall be made to take him back, and not deliver him over to a hostile tribe who might club him to death; that he shall not be stranded in his place of work if he desires to return to his own island. That is a proper provision to make. No such provision was made by the right hon. Gentleman during the days when he presided over the destinies of these unfortunate human beings.

Now I come to the question of compulsory repatriation outside the group of the New Hebrides and of course outside the scope of the Convention. First I take the question of New Caledonia. I believe that between 700 and 800 natives were recruited last year for service in New Caledonia. The whole question of recruiting in New Caledonia, the conditions under which the men are engaged, the conditions under which they work, and the period in which they return to their own country, are utterly beyond the control of His Majesty's Government. We have no more to do with it than with the affairs of Germany, Russia, or any other great Power. I think a great deal of the language that has been used, if not in this House, in the country, about this

Convention is at any rate open to the reproach that it does not take sufficient care of those larger public interests which are involved in the conduct of foreign affairs. But I do not understand how anyone can possibly suppose that the Government of his Britannic Majesty can exercise control over the treatment of labourers who are enlisted to work in a French possession under the authority of the French Government. The complaint that has been made against His Majesty's Government on that ground only shows how little can be urged against us. I have no doubt whatever that the treatment accorded to these natives in New Caledonia is very proper and humane treatment, and is not open to impeachment by us. If we had wished to impeach it, it would not have been in our power to interfere. It would be presumption on my part if I were to refer at any length to such a subject. I pass to Queensland. For some years past a considerable proportion of the labourers have served in Queensland, and the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean has spoken of that traffic as "blackbirding." It is at an end. It has been completely put a stop to, and all the regulations which the right hon. Gentleman opposite admires so much are abolished. That is a matter which lies wholly in the past. Very well; all that remains is Fiji. What is the position in regard to Fiji? For a considerable number of years there has been an importation of natives to work under indenture in Fiji. Does the right hon. Gentleman realise to what dimensions the importation of native labour into Fiji has attained? Is he aware that in the last ten years about 750 Polynesian natives have been imported into Fiji, but that half at least of these come from the Solomon Islands? Therefore the average annual importation into Fiji is about thirty-six or thirty-seven under indenture.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): Under indenture, yes; but there are a great many who go without indentures.

*MR. CHURCHILL: That is all who have gone under indenture. To such a small point is the objection reduced. We are dealing not with great masses of Chinese crossing the ocean in thousands to labour in South Africa, but with the importation of thirty-six men per annum into Fiji. But small as is the scale of importation, I admit the moral significance of the complaint which the right hon. Gentleman makes He says it is compulsory that these men should be repatriated to the New Hebrides at the end of their indenture in Fiji. He is entirely wrong. There is nothing whatever in the law of Fiji which will make it compulsory. Nothing prevents a man from coming in without indentures, and nothing prevents him from remaining after the indenture ceases, if he chooses. Nobody would dream of preventing him, and if they did desire to prevent him it would not be in their power. There was, in fact, in 1905 a prosperous colony of 2,022 Polynesians in Fiji, including women and children; only 316 were under indenture, and the others were either engaged under contract as day labourers or had found employment as domestic servants. Now a charge of insincerity has been bluntly brought against us in this matter. I say that neither in scale nor in quality, neither in principle nor in degree, has any charge of insincerity or inconsistency on this question of compulsory repatriation been brought home to this side of the House or to His Majesty's Government. On the contrary, in every detail, however small, that charge has been completely rebutted, and there is not one single statement on the subject of compulsory repatriation under the New Hebrides Ordinance made from the beginning to the end of this controversy by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, or the Leader of the Opposition, or those sitting behind them, or those more distant political orators in the country who speak upon the subject of compulsory repatriation, which has not from beginning to end been wholly and totally and completely false.

MR. LYTTELTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman, before he leaves this subject, answer the Question I put to him, which was whether the Government of New Caledonia or the Government of Fiji have been consulted as to whether those whom the hon. Member on the occasion called "savages and cannibals" are to be permitted to remain there?

*MR. CHURCHILL: I can accept no responsibility whatever on behalf of the Government of New Caledonia. It is a French possession and the right hon. Gentleman who has held high office under the Crown ought not to speak with levity of what has been done by another Government. So far as the Government of Fiji is concerned no representations have been made, because no representations were necessary. The law as it stands allows any native of the New Hebrides who may wish to live in Fiji at the end of his indentures to live there, and in fact the majority of the Polynesian colony has been built up by people of that sort. Now, can contradiction in explicit terms go further than that?

Now I have shown the Committee how small is the scale of their importation and indenture. But after all, the scale does not affect the moral issue. If there were only one man, and he lived at the other end of the world, it would be right and proper that the House of Commons should take into consideration his cause if he were ill treated. Therefore I sympathise profoundly with the right hon. Gentleman in his frenzy of humanity, and in his earnest desire to elevate the standard of labour and of civilisation in all quarters of the globe. The right hon. Gentleman impeached our sincerity. What about the sincerity of his Party in connection with this New Hebrides Convention? Is it the cause of humanity in the New Hebrides for which they are fighting, or is it inhumanity in South Africa? Is it the desire to elevate labour standards in the New Hebrides, or the desire to preserve the particular standard which they think high, but which most other people think low, in the colonies of South Africa? At the end of his speech the right hon. Gentleman clearly showed the motives which inspired his attack and the attack of his Party on the New Hebrides Convention. It is not humanity in the New Hebrides for which they are fighting—it is to support the rotten cause of Chinese labour in South Africa. The right hon. Gentleman is in love with the Chinese Ordinance—it is his own invention—and in order to prop it up and maintain it as a permanent institution in South Africa he is willing to go, not merely all over the confines of the British Empire, but he is prepared to go even outside those limits, to lands which are not under the British flag, and then, however small is the ground of complaint, however weak and feeble is the foundation upon which the attack may be based, we may be quite sure it will be utilised in the sacred cause of cheap labour for the magnates of the Rand.

Now I come to the third point in the right hon. Gentleman's—I will not say indictment, but of his complaint. He referred to the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, which he called a trade union, and I hope the trade unionists present will appreciate the compliment. The right hon. Gentleman was very much shocked at a certain statement I made about the character and methods of this association. I sympathise deeply with the right hon. Gentleman. His delicate nerves do not easily support the expressions of harsh political controversy. I fear his mind must have been most terribly lacerated during the course of the recent County Council elections. What is it I have said against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association? I have pointed out that in the Transvaal there is a ring of mining companies controlled by a very few individuals, who are able to exert a vast influence upon the social, economic, and political life of that country. These individuals have operated through the Chamber of Mines, through the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, and to a great extent through the political organisation of the Progressive Party in South Africa, and they have operated through the Press, for the Press is largely owned by these very persons to whom I refer. I have said, and I say still, that I believe a great many people who are members of the Chamber of Mines and of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association are worthy, respectable, patriotic people. But I do say also, and I ask the House of Commons to support me on this point, that the most respectable people upon those bodies have not been those who have had the most influence, and that the influence which has been exerted—the great influence of the mining companies—and the money power exerted has been upon the whole a sinister influence. I do not propose to withdraw that statement in any respect or in any degree. Then I am asked what the meaning of the word "sinister" is. I do not say that it necessarily implies corruption. I admit that it does not necessarily imply corruption, but I should be sorry to say that it necessarily excludes it. What I mean is that kind of influence which was brought to bear on Mr. Howard Pym, who was dismissed from the auditorship of a number of companies in Johannesburg because he chose to express certain political views. It was in these circumstances that we were forced to consider the position of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association. I do not deny that this association in regard to many conditions of native recruiting constituted a distinct advance upon the conditions of free recruiting which preceded it. But we have always felt that between monopolies and free recruiting there was a middle course which could well be tried, and when a group of prominent mines wished to secede from the Native Labour Association, we were not prepared to refuse them the facilities they sought. The right hon. Gentleman said the Government gave a preference to Mr. Robinson for nothing. We gave no preference. We were prepared to use our influence equally on behalf of other companies and groups of companies of equal substance who might desire these facilities. But, of course, such a process takes time, and it took so much time in the case of Mr. J. B. Robinson that, as a matter of fact, no facilities were given to him until the time when the Government changed, and the Native Government came into power in South Africa. So far from Mr. J. B. Robinson—for whom I do not hold any brief, although I am bound to say he seems to take a very sensible, practical view of the question of labour supply in South Africa—so far from his having gained advantages from His Majesty's Government in return for which nothing has been gained, the exact contrary is true. Mr. J. B. Robinson and his group surrendered 3,000 Chinese licences, which enabled us to terminate that unfortunate importation at an earlier date. And in return he got no practical or effective or technical advantage of any sort or kind whatever—[OPPOSITION cries of "Oh"]—none—[OPPOSITION ironical laughter]—none, none, none. No facilities which were of any use have been obtained from the Portuguese Government. I very much regret that we were not able to proceed more rapidly, but many delays have been interposed, and necessarily now, of course, the question enters on an entirely new phase. I submit to the Committee that the right hon. Gentleman's charges in regard to our having given a preference to Mr. J. B. Robinson, or of my having spoken disrespectfully with regard to the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, are not less artificial and unsubstantiated than his statements about compulsory repatriation under the New Hebrides Convention. What was the substance of the charge which I ventured to make? I have been much attacked on the subject, and I hope I may ask the indulgence of the Committee in replying. It is quite clear that while the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association had the monopoly of recruiting, it was in their power, as it were, to open and close by a valve the supply of native labour, which influenced the whole fortunes of the mines in South Africa. And I am bound to say, having regard to the great power and influence of these few individuals to whom I have referred, already exercised, I cannot think that that power could have been extended to the supply of native labour without becoming detrimental to the interests of the State. I am not the only person who has said these things. Mr. E. P. Solomon, who is a Minister of the new Transvaal Government, and was elected for a constituency in the Transvaal, speaking at Fordsburg on 15th January said—

> "There was the labour, but why did they not get it? Because Mr. Lionel Phillips, a member of the house of Eckstein, went down to Delagoa Bay with the chairman of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association to prevent the Portuguese Government from giving the right of recruiting to Mr. J. B. Robinson, or anybody else. They were doing all they could to stop recruiting in a proper and sensible manner. Why? They wanted to force their hand for more Chinese. That was the only reason. That was all they wanted."

You could not have the charge which I ventured to make in forcible terms to the House put in more explicit terms outside the House, and that statement was not made in a privileged place. The speaker was quite open to be sued for libel if his statement constituted a libel, and when we hear all these threats of bringing libel actions, I only wonder why persons who make statements in unprivileged places are not the persons first challenged by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, and why they should not find in Mr. E. P. Solomon's statement the fullest means of establishing that public vindication of their policy which they profess themselves so earnestly to desire. I could quote to the Committee a great many statements made in South Africa by the most prominent men upon this very question of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, which thoroughly justify me in saying what I thought it my duty to say to the Committee.

MR. LYTTELTON: It is evidence we want.

*MR. CHURCHILL: I am quoting statements which have been made by persons of prominence in South Africa during the last six months, statements on any one of which it would be perfectly open to the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association to take action. Mr. J. B. Robinson said in a letter to the *Daily News*—

> "The whole question has now resolved itself into one of money, and we shall see whether this power will succeed in setting aside the just claims of those who are trying to obtain labour for the mines. We are now confronted with a lamentable spectacle in a British Colony. The money and methods of Tammany are being pitted against the undoubted rights of the people, and against the prestige and diplomacy of the British Government."

That was a tolerably explicit statement. I do not desire to detain the Committee; all I would say upon the question is that I stated to the House a definite political opinion, and stated it in good faith, and based it on much information, from all kinds of sources, official and unofficial. I believe it was perfectly true at the time, and it was said in the public interests at the time. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured, mischievously I think, to suggest that there was some difference of opinion between me and my noble friend Lord Elgin on this subject. There is nothing of the sort, there is no difference of opinion whatever; if there were any difference of opinion on a subject so serious as this, it is quite clear that I should not be standing here this afternoon.

MR. LYTTELTON: May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether, after what his chief, the Colonial Secretary, has said, he persists in imputing malpractices to this association?

*MR. CHURCHILL: I do most certainly persist—[OPPOSITION cries of "Oh," and MINISTERIAL cheers]—in saying——

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): Before the hon. Gentleman answers that, will he give to the House the speech which the Chief Justice of the Transvaal made relating to certain mines two years ago, when every word of the Colonial Under-Secretary was vindicated by the Chief Justice?

MR. CHURCHILL: I have not the speech with me; if the hon. Member intervenes in the debate perhaps he will read it. I did not desire to dwell upon this subject; but challenged as I have been, represented as having stated facts which are false and which are not capable of being sustained, I can only say that I offered to the House an honest political opinion, and that I do persist in saying that the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association had the power to turn off and to turn on the tap of native labour—[AN HON. MEMBER: Did they?]—and that I believe, speaking to the best of my ability, they did so when it was desirable and necessary to their interests. I do not desire to dwell on these stale topics, which belong to the *régime* that is passing away—that is gone. We have a new Government in South Africa; that Government has been produced by no astute calculations—[OPPOSITION cries of "Oh"]—of individuals, by no political intrigue, by no counting of what this or that man or Party would do in this or that particular circumstance; it has been produced by the frank application of large principles to a harmonious set of circumstances; and when large democratic principles are so applied they are principles to which individuals and Parties and communities are irresistibly and even insensibly compelled to conform. Sir, we have a new Government in the Transvaal. Could anything be more dramatic or more impressive than the fact that General Botha is to-day the Premier? It is a Government which possesses great strength in the electorate of the Transvaal. More than three-fifths of the electorate, and over three-quarters of the population, as I calculate them, are the supporters of the Government which has been called into being. It has the support of almost all the Dutch in the country, it has the support of, I think, an actual majority of the British or non-Dutch. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] We have the electoral Returns, anyone can examine the facts. This Government is a Government equally divorced from the old Kruger *régime* and from the later capitalist domination; it is independent of what was bad in the pre-war days, it is independent of what has been bad in the days that followed the war. And I may say it is the earnest desire of every one in this House of Commons which has called the new Transvaal Parliament into being, to befriend and protect that Government in the great initial difficulties with which it will be confronted, and without respect of Parties to do our best to enable it to surmount the enormous political, social, and economic problems with which it has to deal. It is with a feeling of confidence in the capacity of that Government that I would close these remarks to the Committee, and we shall watch its progress not only with a feeling of confidence but also with a feeling of hope which shines all the brighter by contrast with the solemn reflections that lie around and behind it.

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich) said that the hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for the Colonies had traversed a good deal of ground, and it was difficult to know in replying with which of his points to begin. The hon. Gentleman made against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association a definite charge of what amounted to corruption. He was asked to produce evidence or to withdraw. He had produced what he considered evidence, and the Committee had heard that evidence. The first extract the hon. Gentleman read was a speech made by a gentleman at a contested election in South Africa; the next extract was a letter by Mr. J. B. Robinson, a gentleman who had got the better of the Government in a deal. Mr. Robinson would be a much less generous man than even he could be if he would not pay the Government that small tribute in return for what they had done for him. But there was more than that. The hon. Gentleman said that he had in support of his charge evidence, unofficial and official. Yet Lord Selborne was asked by the Witwatersand Native Labour Association if any information, official or otherwise, had been transmitted by him, and he gave the answer that there was none.

MR. CHURCHILL: The hon. Gentleman misquotes me. I did not say I had evidence in support of the charge, official and unofficial. [OPPOSITION cries of "Yes."] No, I said I based my statement on information from South Africa from many sources, official and unofficial.

MR. BONAR LAW said the distinction was not a very clear one. But if the hon. Gentleman meant that he withdrew the statement that he had official information they had gained something. The hon. Gentleman had said that the whole subject was stale. The question of Chinese labour had served its purpose for hon. Gentlemen opposite. They would forget it if they could, but he could assure them that His Majesty's Opposition would be much more feeble than even they supposed it was before it allowed them to forget it. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies had made some very clever speeches on the subject; speeches which deserved promotion, and no doubt would receive it when the Government were ready to face the inconvenience of the loss of the hon. Gentleman's seat at Manchester. The policy of the Government, as explained in those speeches, was to do nothing, and to threaten everything. That was precisely the policy which anyone who had the interest of South Africa at heart would be the last to adopt. What most injuriously affected industry was uncertainty—the prospect of evils to come—and the Government would have done less permanent harm to the great industry upon which the Transvaal depended if, on their election to office, they had turned the Chinese out of the country, bag and baggage. A year ago the Under-Secretary said that the policy of the Government had lowered the price of mining shares in South Africa. That did not merely mean a fall in the value of mining shares; it meant also the loss of public confidence in South Africa, the withdrawal of capital for all purposes, and was the direct cause of the distress through want of employment which now prevailed in South Africa. Just at the moment when the country was realising the consequences of the agitation against Chinese labour it was confronted with the New Hebrides Convention. That Convention was far worse than the Chinese Ordinance. The Ordinance applied only to grown-up men; the Convention applied to women and little children, and obviously it was the duty of any Government to be more careful in taking precautions against the ill-treatment of the labourers in the latter case than in the former. One of the great points made against the Ordinance was in regard to the minimum wage paid to the Chinese. Some difference of opinion prevailed as to its exact amount, but it was between 30s. and 40s. per month. But there was absolutely no minimum wage under the New Hebrides Convention. The recruiter might engage labourers at half-a-crown a month, and it was only where there was no agreement that the wage was fixed at 10s. a month. It was said also that the Chinese were ill-treated. Elaborate precautions were taken that all complaints should reach a representative of His Majesty's Government in South Africa, and the moment the complaint was justified redress was given. Under the New Hebrides Convention, no matter how any man, woman, or child might be ill-treated, there must be three complaints before action was taken; and when the Prime Minister of Australia pointed out that this grievance should be redressed, no heed was taken of his remonstrance. Under the Chinese Ordinance no Chinaman was allowed to leave his country until he had convinced some representative of the British Government that he understood the contract. No such precaution was taken under the New Hebrides Convention. Again, the Prime Minister urged on His Majesty's Government the necessity of precautions being taken against deception, and again his remonstrance was unheeded. Another regulation of the Convention was that the recruiting of women should have the assent of the tribal chief. Everyone knew what that implied, and yet the Government which had filled the country with denunciations of Chinese morality had signed that Convention. Then there was the question of compulsory repatriation.

MR. CHURCHILL: Surely the hon. Gentleman realises that New Caledonia is not within the scope of the jurisdiction of the Convention.

MR. BONAR LAW said he did realise it; but what the hon. Gentleman did not realise was that His Majesty's Government might have followed the example of the Chinese Government, which, in the case of the Chinese Ordinance, had suggested regulations as to the way its subjects should be treated out of its jurisdiction. The hon. Gentleman thought that the British Government had no such duty towards its subjects when they passed into countries outside its jurisdiction. That was all he had to say about the New Hebrides Convention, but he thought that much more would be heard of it in the future. He hoped that through the length and breadth of the land that which he had touched upon imperfectly to-day would be thoroughly dealt with, and that at by-elections and wherever the opportunity offered the country would be brought to see the difference between the late Opposition and the Government in power. He still thought that, after all that had happened, there were a few hon. Members on the opposite side who honestly objected to Chinese labour on its merits. [Cheers.] That cheer was not loud, still there were some, but not many now. There were a few who really believed that one mandate the Government received was to send the Chinese out of South Africa. Did they really expect that to happen now? ["Yes."] The hon. Gentleman was very sanguine, if he and the hon. Member were betting men he would give the hon. Member long odds that the Chinese would be in South Africa long after the right hon. Gentlemen had ceased to sit on the Treasury Bench. How could they be sent back? Admitted the Government desired to send them away, they had not the courage to do it when they had the power, but tried indirectly to get support for their policy in South Africa. The Committee must have felt that a very lame defence had been made of the J. B. Robinson transaction. His right hon. friend had put the case so plainly that little remained to be said. The Government gave the representative of a particular group of mines a concession which was worth so much hard cash in their pockets. ["No."] The one thing wanted was cheap labour, and to him was given means for obtaining it which were not given to any one else. The hon. Gentleman had said something about the gentleman who had obtained the preference. He (Mr. Law) did not know the gentleman, but he knew what was common knowledge in South Africa. He knew that the Government had always found difficulty in some mines in enforcing the native regulations, and last year a new Act was passed making the regulations more stringent. And he knew that throughout South Africa that Act bore the name of the "J. B. R. Coercion Act." That was the gentleman to whom His Majesty's Government had given a special privilege to recruit native labour, which was denied to everybody else.

MR. CHURCHILL: What privilege?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The privilege.

MR. CHURCHILL: How many natives has Mr. Robinson recruited and what has been his advantage?

MR. BONAR LAW said the hon. Gentleman was less astute than usual; it not a question of how much was made out of it, but what was the bargain the Government made with him. The hon. Gentleman showed by his remark that he did not understand why this privilege was given. If they had been talking of some other countries they might easily have given the reason, but we in this country had not fallen so low as to believe that there could be anything like personal corruption, but he would say deliberately there had been political corruption. It was given to Mr. Robinson to buy his support to the policy of driving the Chinese out of South Africa. That was not the only support the endeavour was made to buy. The Boers were also tried, but in that particular kind of game the Boers were expert. It was a remark of Carlyle in his *French Revolution* in reference to the charges against Mirabeau, that "he was paid for, but he was not bought." It was exactly the same here. The hon. Member and his Government paid for the support of the Boers by giving them power in the Constitution to which they were not entitled; they were paid, but they were not bought. The moment the Constitution was granted, the moment everything the Boers hoped to get was given, the Boers cheered their Prime Minister, General Botha, when he said—

> "The talk of wholesale repatriation of the Chinese is nonsense."

That described the policy of His Majesty's Government. In the face of facts how could sanguine hon. Gentlemen expect that the Chinese would be sent out of South Africa? Every party in South Africa had declared that they would not be sent out until substitutes were found. Did anybody suppose that the Government would do what in their wilder moments they had threatened—use the veto for the purpose? If any one thought that he was mistaken. It had been tried in Natal, but twenty-four hours was enough to learn the lesson, and it would never again be tried in South Africa. The Under-Secretary came to the most interesting part of his speech with his peroration about the new Constitution. Everybody would admit that the granting of the Constitution under the existing conditions was an experiment, and whatever might be the result—and he sincerely hoped it would be favourable—it was a dangerous experiment, but, to be just to the Government, they laid their plans well and entered upon the experiment under favourable auspices. When the Constitution was announced it was received, it could not be said with enthusiasm, but at least with equanimity by every section in South Africa. Did the hon. Gentlemen think that they in South Africa thought it was fair? No, they all knew that the Constitution had been gerrymandered in the interests of the Boers; they knew that, but they knew also that any change must be an improvement; they knew that any Government for South Africa, in whatever way it was formed, must have some regard to the interests of South Africa, and that they would not be treated as the right hon. Gentleman opposite had treated them.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I think there was one sentence in his speech the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down might well have omitted in a speech delivered in this House, and that was the sentence in which he said he hoped that the constitutional experiment would be favourable, for any speech less calculated to assist in bringing about that result I do not think could well have been made. It suits his party purpose to introduce the question of Chinese labour expressly with a view to pouring contempt on the whole Government. The Constitution may be open to any criticism he wishes to bring to bear against it, but if he wishes to bring these criticisms, I think at least he might have avoided the inconsistency of saying he hoped the experiment would turn out favourably. The Constitution was drawn up on liberal principles after an impartial inquiry, and it was not gerrymandered, and now that the Constitution has been accepted on all sides, as something that is to be given a fair chance, now that the first election is over, I do trust that here, at any rate, we shall do all we can to ensure its working in such a manner as will bring the two races together and unify sentiment in South Africa. As to the use of Chinese labour and the details in regard to the licence granted to Mr. Robinson, of course I am not competent to enter upon the subject in minute detail, but I do entirely approve of an attempt being made to encourage the amount of white labour in the mines. I have always heard, and I believe it is the case, that until now the experiment of white labour has never had a fair chance; and in my opinion the Government and the Colonial Office are perfectly justified, and are bound to take the opportunity of giving encouragement to anyone willing to make the experiment. Now as to Chinese labour, and what the course of the Transvaal Government in regard to it is likely to be. The hon. Member spoke as if he were in the confidence of General Botha. He omitted these words, which were spoken as lately as 4th December last, in which he said—

> "I hope the burghers will consider the matter, and resolutely ask that the Chinese should be repatriated when their contracts expire."

MR. BONAR LAW: The words which I read were used in February.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The words of the hon. Member were, I think, to the effect that they would not send the Chinese back wholesale. But there was never any question of sending them back wholesale. The words I have read were "resolutely ask that the Chinese should be repatriated when their contracts expire." It was understood, I believe, all last year, that wholesale repatriation was impossible. The question was what was to happen when the existing contracts expired, and on that I do not see that the quotation of the hon. Member shows that there is any difference between the views of the Government and those of General Botha.

MR. BONAR LAW: I can give you the rest, if you like.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have also got a great deal more, and it is even stronger than what I have read. I now come to the question of the New Hebrides Convention, with which I am more particularly concerned, and on which what I have said has been quoted and criticised this afternoon. Since the right hon. Gentleman spoke I have had an opportunity of referring to what I did say with regard to responsibility for this Convention, but I cannot find a word or a sentence in anything I said previously in the House of Commons which justifies the right hon. Gentleman in saying that I had said that there was anything in the Convention for which blame must be attached to the French Government and not to ourselves. I said there was equal responsibility, but I went on to argue that blame should attach to neither. Of course, there is joint responsibility, but there is not anything in the Convention for which we are not prepared to take our share of the responsibility as well as the French Government, and I have never said anything to give any other impression. And when the hon. Member spoke, as he did, of this Convention as if it were going to entail gross cruelty, immorality, and other statements of that kind, I repudiate, on behalf of the French Government and this Government alike, anything of the kind. If this question, of which, we are told, we are to hear very much more, is to proceed, I trust, at any rate, the subject of New Caledonia will be kept out of the discussion. The right hon. Gentleman asked whether we had sent intimation to the Governor of New Caledonia. It is absolutely out of the question either that the British Government should send intimations to New Caledonia or that the French Government should send intimations to Fiji. We must keep the two possessions outside the New Hebrides entirely separate. There is nothing in the Convention which makes it certain that any French recruiters will recruit for places outside the New Hebrides which are under the British flag, nor that British recruiters will recruit for places outside the New Hebrides which are under any other than the British flag. Therefore I think you must keep those two things separate. Let us stick to British possessions. The regulations for recruiters are not yet drawn up, but it would be perfectly possible to give instructions that British recruiters should only be licensed to recruit British territory, and *vice versa*, if you please. The High Commissioners issue their recruiting licences under the Ordinance separately, and they give each other notice of the licences they have issued. They retain power under the Ordinance from time to time to make further regulations stating what the conditions of recruiting are to be; therefore let us deal with British possessions and British subjects only, and leave the other out of account. The French Government are perfectly capable of seeing that the regulations are, so far as they are concerned, humane and satisfactory, in every respect; and nobody doubts they will do so. The right hon. Gentleman found fault with me for having said that the state of things in the New Hebrides under this Ordinance would be an improvement upon anything which had existed before, and his justification for that was that there had been a Queensland Ordinance with regulations more strict than those which are contained in the New Hebrides Convention. I wonder how far that Queensland Ordinance was ever applied in the New Hebrides themselves? I imagine not at all. I imagine that under that Ordinance there were not inspectors in the New Hebrides to inspect recruiting, and the sole effect of that Ordinance was to lay down the conditions under which labourers should be employed in Queensland, whether they came from the New Hebrides or anywhere else. The point we have to consider now is, are the conditions of recruiting generally in the New Hebrides going to be better or worse than they have been before? If the Queensland Ordinance did not touch the question of native recruiting in the New Hebrides unless the native of the New Hebrides was actually landed in Queensland, it did not make regulations for dealing with the New Hebrides; and, if the right hon. Gentleman opposite meant that under the Queensland Ordinance the conditions in the New Hebrides themselves were much better than they would be under the present Ordinance, it was a misleading argument.

MR. LYTTELTON: I never said any such thing; what I said was that there had been for many years in existence, with respect to the New Hebrides, conditions which, at any rate, were better than those His Majesty's Government were proposing, and that they were the model from which you should have advanced, and not receded.

SIR EDWARD GREY: There were no conditions in the New Hebrides. The condition in the New Hebrides was that there was no inspection with regard to recruiting, and no control over it. Under this Ordinance there will be inspection and there will be control. That is a step in advance. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that the age in the Queensland Ordinance was sixteen years. There is nothing in this Convention to say that the age is to be under sixteen.

MR. LYTTELTON: Children.

SIR EDWARD GREY: "Children" means anybody under age. The hon. Member who spoke last said the Convention affected children of tender age.

MR. LYTTELTON: Young children.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Children of tender age.

MR. BONAR LAW: I never used the words "tender age." I said "little children."

SIR EDWARD GREY: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. That will do equally well. The regulation with regard to height was expressly put in because the regulation with regard to age is misleading. You might have a regulation as to the age of sixteen years, but it would have been impossible to ensure that the regulation was carried out. The regulation with regard to height has been put in general terms in the Convention in order that instructions may be sent to the Commissioners expressly to fix the height so that little children shall be excluded from any possibility of recruiting. [Laughter.] I would ask hon. Members who ridicule that observation to wait till the instructions to the Commissioners are laid before the House and until the regulations with regard to height has been settled. It is surely possible to draw regulations with regard to height which would prevent the employment of people of tender age; and if you cannot tell the age I think the height is much the better guide of the two.

Now I come to the question of compulsory repatriation. The right hon. Gentleman still places on the Convention the interpretation that repatriation is to be compulsory upon the native who is employed. I said before that that is not the intention of those who drew the Convention, and I do not think the words bear out that contention. I say that still. It is not the intention, it is not the construction which is going to be placed on the words. The right hon. Gentleman asked me whether intimation had been sent to the Governor of Fiji on this point. I did not rise to answer that with a definite "Yes" or "No," because the truth is much more nearly "Yes" and "No" than could be conveyed by either alone. The answer as to whether any intimation has been made to Fiji is "No." That is because the regulations will not be in force for some time. The answer as to whether intimation will be made to Fiji that our interpretation of compulsory repatriation, and not the right hon. Gentleman's, is the correct one, is "Yes," The right hon. Gentlemen then says, "Are you going to force upon Fiji the obligation to retain these people, whom you call savages and cannibals?" If Fiji does not desire to have these people, with the prospect of having to let them stay in the island, they had better not let them come at all. But if they are imported into Fiji they must be imported with the right to stay there, with the right to have the opportunity to engage in other forms of employment.

And now I come again to my four points as to Chinese labour; and I would say that, in my mind, they absolutely destroy the analogy between Chinese labour and this Convention. My first point was that they are shut up in compounds; my second was that they are shut up in compounds for some three years without women; my third was that they are restricted to unskilled labour; and my fourth was that when their contract ceases they are to be turned out of the country as aliens. I have always said, and I say again, that to place industry, to place labour of that kind under those conditions is to place it on unnatural and unwholesome conditions. Nothing of that applies to this Ordinance. And surely what the right hon. Gentleman forgets, or what he has not realised, is that this Ordinance is the beginning, the foundation on which instructions and regulations are to be laid for the management of labour in the New Hebrides. Hitherto there have been none so far as we are concerned. Now we have drawn this Convention by joint agreement as the general lines on which the regulation of labour is to take place in the New Hebrides. The right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members opposite assume that these regulations, as they appear in the Convention, are a maximum. They are not the maximum. They are the minimum of safeguards from which we start. They have to be supplemented by instructions to the Commissioners with regard to the carrying of them out, and they are supplemented in the Convention by power to the Commissioners to make regulations to see that they are properly carried out. And of all the points which have been made hitherto I do not think there is one which cannot be covered by regulations to be made by the Commissioners in the islands, or instructions to be sent to them. Take the hours of labour, for instance. The provision in the Convention is simply to exclude altogether hours of labour at night; it is not to say that the hours of labour in the day must be twelve, nor does it prevent further regulations being drawn up by the Commissioners to see that in each case the hours of labour not only do not amount to twelve, but are not under any conditions excessive. And when the regulations are carried out you must have inspectors appointed under them to see, not merely that nobody is employed in night work, but that the conditions under which they are employed during the day, and the length of time that they are employed during the day, are proper and not oppressive.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me where the powers are given in the Convention to the Commissioners to remodel the whole conditions of labour laid down in the Convention?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Article 7 says—

> "The High Commissioners shall have power to issue jointly for the peace, order, and good government of the group, as well as for the execution of the measures resulting from the present Convention, local regulations binding on all the inhabitants of the group."

Sir Edward Grey.

[OPPOSITION cries of "Outside the group."] As regards any British territory outside, surely that is a matter to be dealt with by instructions to Fiji, or to any British territory to which the labourers are sent. And, if in any British territory to which the labourers are sent the conditions are more stringent than they are under the New Hebrides Convention, it will be the conditions in the place to which they go which will govern the condition of the labourers there. In the group you have power to the Commissioners to make supplementary regulations, and to see that the provisions of this Convention are carried out in a humane and reasonable manner. Outside the group in British territory you have equal power to regulate the whole conditions of labour of everybody in that territory whether they go there from the New Hebrides or anywhere else; and any importations from the New Hebrides will get the benefit of the conditions there. Take the further point of whether natives will be engaged not understanding the conditions of the contract. Clearly, under this Convention when it comes into force you must, as far as British recruiting is concerned, have officers who, before embarkation, will investigate the conditions and make sure that the natives recruited do understand the conditions under which they are engaged. But that is not a matter to be provided for in the Convention itself. [OPPOSITION Cries of "Why not?"] Because we have got to draw up for ourselves the instructions and regulations necessary for carrying out the Convention. The Convention lays down a certain general minimum of safeguards. It remains for us, when the Convention has to be worked, to send the instructions to the Commissioners to make the regulations to ensure that the Convention is carried out in the spirit as well as in the letter. The Commissioners must, of course, have power to decide from time to time what are the conditions which it is thought fit to impose upon recruiters. They clearly will have an ample discretion, by the appointment of inspectors and by the appointment of officers for the purpose, to ensure that these abuses which hon. Members say might arise under the Convention shall not arise. The Convention prescribes certain general objects. It does not say how those objects are to be carried out. How they are to be carried out and whether they are efficiently carried out depends, and must depend, upon the regulations issued by the Commissioners on the spot on instructions sent to them. [Mr. STANLEY WILSON: "We put it all in the Chinese Convention."] One thing more is wanted. The House has got the Convention before it. It must, of course, have before it when the regulations are drawn up, as they will be drawn up before the Convention comes into force, the instructions which are drawn up for our Commissioners, and it will have from time to time the regulations made under the Convention for the carrying out of the Convention. You have two alternatives otherwise. One is to leave labour entirely unregulated, which I think is undesirable; the other is to prohibit labour being engaged in the islands at all, which, of course, is out of the question and would not be for the good of the islands—it would make progress impossible. Here you have the possibility of a Convention such as this, which is being laid down as the starting point, but which needs to be supplemented by instructions and regulations for the carrying of it out. Within those limits there is ample power for making satisfactory and humane regulations, and I have not the least doubt that before the Convention comes into force the House will be satisfied by the instructions which have been issued that they are such as will secure that the Convention is carried out, not only in the letter, but in the spirit.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) said the remarks which had just fallen from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs were very interesting and illuminating in some respects, but they were by no means conclusive. The right hon. Baronet had given no reasons whatever why England and France, which were jointly responsible for the well-being of the natives in the New Hebrides, had no joint responsibility and apparently no individual responsibility for the well-being of the natives outside the islands.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I did not say that.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies in answer to a question had replied that it was within the power of these officers to refuse licences for work outside the group unless they were satified that such work would be conducted under proper conditions. That answer was scarcely sufficient. It was unreasonable that France and England, which were jointly responsible for the natives and the conditions under which they lived and worked in the New Hebrides, should limit their joint responsibility to the conditions under which the natives worked within the islands. He suggested that one of the reasons for signing this Convention was not merely to give British and French settlers opportunities for employing native labour under certain conditions, but rather to have a Convention which would give to France the opportunity of employing natives to a very large extent for labour in the mines of New Caledonia. He desired to be careful in speaking of our relations with a foreign country, and he could understand the reticence of the right hon. Baronet upon the point. He would like, however, to point out that there were only between 500 and 600 French and British settlers in the New Hebrides, and, therefore, the amount of native labour they would require was not very great. Any hon. Member who studied the conditions prevailing in New Caledonia would find that they had got there, not 600 French and British settlers, but 12,000 French settlers and 11,000 prisoners and recidivists, and those settlers were free and engaged in business and desired to engage natives. There were only something like 20,000 natives altogether, which was an insufficient number, when the women and children were deducted, to provide sufficient labour for the fast developing mines in New Caledonia. If they compared New Caledonia with the New Hebrides they would find that the former was in a more civilised state with its commerce and trade developing fast, and, therefore, there was a very large demand for labour. If this Convention was to rest solely upon the employment of natives by the settlers in the New Hebrides, it was not worth the paper it was written on. One of the parties to the Convention desired, not with any ulterior object, to have a larger supply of native labour, and they signed it because it gave freedom to France to make her own regulations for making and recruiting labour under conditions which France alone should establish, and to get all the labourers she required for New Caledonia from the New Hebrides. He did not quarrel with that, but he did quarrel with putting the Convention upon any other basis but that. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had spoken about the articles of the Convention dealing with the employment of labour as being simply the broad lines upon which the labour was to be conducted. The right hon. Gentleman said that the natives under the Convention would have rights. They might be employed from sunrise to sunset, and in twenty to thirty other particulars the Convention was as explicit as the Chinese Ordinance. But the right hon. Baronet said that those articles were only the basis of the Convention. In his opinion it was never intended to go one step further than those articles in regard to the regulations for labour in the New Hebrides had it not been for the debates which had taken place in this House. The silence of hon. Members on the Ministerial side when this question was first raised was the very best proof that they were wholly justified in raising the discussion. The right hon. Baronet had spoken about the details being left for further consideration by the High Commissioner and for further instructions which would be sent out. If France was ready to consider those regulations now, after the Convention was signed, why were not the protests of the Colonies and of Australasia in particular considered before the Convention was signed? Thirty-six of the sixty articles of the Convention were criticised by the Australasian Government. These elaborate, carefully argued, and moderately put proposals were sent home, but it was too late. The right hon. Gentleman suggested to the House that matters had so crystallised between France and England that it would have endangered the signing of the Convention if the protests of the people who understood the conditions had been pressed. He was afraid that the right hon. Gentleman had unintentionally misled the House with regard to the importance of the New Hebrides to Australia in the matter of trade. It was true that France had a greater population in the New Hebrides. The trade of the New Hebrides with Australia had increased. It had been suggested that the Australian tariff prevented the development of trade with the New Hebrides, but the right hon. Gentleman knew that a subsidy had been granted to ships trading between the New Hebrides and Australian ports with the result that the total exports from the New Hebrides in 1905 were £43,000. The exports to Sydney were £25,000 and to Numea £18,000. Apart from the general desire to have proper control of the natives of the island, he honestly believed that the Convention rested upon the desire on the part of France to have a free hand in the recruiting of natives in the island for New Caledonia. The right hon. Gentleman had suggested that all we had to do in the future was to approach France and get France's consent to new regulations, and then to instruct accordingly the High Commissioners who would grant the licences. Did the right hon. Gentleman think that that was going to be an easy matter now that the Convention was settled? Did he not realise that, if there was a difficulty in getting France to sign the Convention at all, there would be much greater difficulty in reopening the question, and getting what would be called the petty details settled, in a country where the people would not be so exactly concerned for the well-being of the natives on the islands as the followers of the right hon. Gentleman? He and his friends complained of the articles of the Convention as not being full enough, not upon the basis that the natives were being badly treated, but upon the basis that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen were not true to their own professions, and that they had been insincere. Right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite, when in Opposition, insisted that every detail should be worked out, settled, and defined in this House. They would not trust the High Commissioners, nor the officers employed by the Government in South Africa, nor the Government through the Legislative Council. They would not trust their humanity. Humanity as expressed in the views of Members of this House was to be the only guide. The present Opposition had some right to complain. If hon. Gentlemen opposite were going to apply that principle to the making of regulations and to entrust nothing to individuals, then in the signing of this Convention the Government, according to their own views, had not done their duty. He protested against the silence of hon. Members on the other side of the House.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said they were waiting till the hon. Member sat down.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said he had no doubt the hon. Member would be ready to reply. In regard to the question of Mr. J. B. Robinson's relations with the Government, he would only deal with one point in the hon. Gentleman's speech The Under-Secretary had said that all that was necessary for the Witswatersrand Native Labour Association to do to regulate the supply of labour in the Transvaal was to turn on and off the tap at its will.

MR. CHURCHILL: I said it was in their power.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: But why did the hon. Gentleman make such a statement unless he meant that they were likely to do it? What evidence was there that the association turned on and off the tap at any moment? The hon. Gentleman knew that the Chamber of Mines in the Transvaal by two separate resolutions refused at all to consider the idea of bringing Chinese, Japs, or Oriental labour into the Transvaal. It determined first to use every effort to see how many of the 500,000 natives could be got. Before the war they had between 100,000 and 110,000. Where was the evidence of turning on and off the tap in the record after the war? In 1901 there were 14,851 recruited; in 1902, 58,000; in 1903, 85,000; in 1904, 87,000; in 1905, 101,000; and in 1906, 90,000. There was thus a steady increase during these years. There had been £424,000 spent in recruiting. There was absolutely no turning on and off of the tap. There were 30,000 natives employed in domestic and other kinds of work outside the mines. They had come to the Witwatersrand district since the war, so that there were as many native labourers in the Transvaal now as there were before the war. The hon. Gentleman wanted to justify the attack which had been made on the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association. He also wanted to justify the action with regard to Mr. J. B. Robinson, who agreed to give up his licence for 3,000 Chinese if he could have the privilege of recruiting in Portuguese East Africa. Was that a fact? The hon. Gentleman said the other day that, on the day of the meeting of the Commission that had been appointed to consider the whole question of recruiting in Portuguese East Africa, the Portuguese Government had agreed to denounce their agreement with the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association. Was that a fact?

MR. CHURCHILL: That was the agreement which the Portuguese Government made. The date of the Commission is not yet fixed. The state of things which it affects is entirely altered.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Then I understand that the Commission lapses. Is that the case?

MR. CHURCHILL: The Commission will not be persisted in unless it is the wish of the new Government.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said the hon. Gentleman had brought charges against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association which he had not supported by a particle of evidence. He had made the charges in order to secure a political point at the moment, knowing in his own mind when he did so that the Commission would not be appointed until after the burden of responsibility had been thrown upon the people of the Transvaal.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Commission was not to inquire into the methods of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said he knew that very well, but the point which the hon. Gentleman made against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was that it turned on and off the tap of native labour when it chose and that its methods were corrupt, whereas the evidence was entirely against him from every quarter. He made those charges to score a political point, hoping to get advantage for his friend Mr. J. B. Robinson, but that had not been achieved.

The Government knew that it would not be achieved because of the correct attitude of the Portuguese Government.

MR. CHURCHILL said that the hon. Gentleman had no right to speak in that manner. The hon. Gentleman had no reason to know what was in his mind. He had spoken to the Committee with the utmost frankness when he said that he honestly believed that the Commission would in fact meet, and that facilities would be extended to other parties from month to month, until a new state of things supervened.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said that that excuse did not explain the circumstances; and he ventured to suggest that the hon. Gentleman had not substantiated a single charge which had been made against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association. There was a report signed by Mr. Quinn and Mr. Whiteside, friends of the present Government. He knew no more honourable gentleman than Mr. Quinn, who was, moreover, a Labour Member, and in the report which he signed as to the inquiry into the methods of recruiting and the results obtained from it, it was stated that that inquiry had been of the most searching character and that no evidence whatever had been brought forward in support of the accusations made against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, that the officials of the Association had carried out their work zealously, and that the money spent had been well and generously spent, and had been well directed. He knew a great many members of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines and of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, and he had a right to say that the attack made upon them was unworthy of the hon. Gentleman and of the office which he held.

MR. MARKHAM said that Mr. Quinn signed the minority Report.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said that Mr. Quinn signed the minority Report on one point alone; but Mr. Quinn gave his adherence to every statement he had quoted. The hon. Gentleman, he knew, had in his mind competition by respectable bodies for recruiting in Portuguese territory and other parts of South Africa. There was nothing bad in that if the efforts of the Witwatersrand Labour Association had not been beyond reproach; but the concession for entering into that competition had been given to a member of the Witwatersrand Labour Association who had broken the rules of the Association, had been driven from it, and had secured the support of the Government. Would the hon. Gentleman get a return as to the conditions under which the natives in Portuguese Territory were to be recruited? No charge made against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association had, he contended, brought conviction to the House either on the one side or the other. He moved the reduction of the vote by £1,000. The statements of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies in regard to the Progressive Party in the Transvaal, and all those opposed to him, had not been either outspoken or high-minded. If Lord Elgin, and not the Under-Secretary, represented the Colonial Office point of view, then he ventured to say that Lord Elgin's own words were the strongest criticism that had been made of the speeches of the hon. Member on the Chinese question. The chickens were coming home to roost; there would be a good many bills to pay and accounts to settle in South Africa, and everywhere else; and that they would be settled against the present Government when the great accounting came.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item, Class II., Vote 6 (Colonial Office), be reduced by £1,000."—(*Sir Gilbert Parker.*)

MAJOR SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said that the hon. Member for Gravesend had, together with others, made an attack on the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, in regard to what had been said of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association; but he would have supposed that most hon. Members, knowing what the record of that body was in regard to its management, and knowing that it had reduced the wages of the native labourers at the very time when they ought to have been increased——

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Robinson, if you please.

MAJOR SEELY said that that had nothing to do with the matter. If he had been allowed to finish his sentence, he would have said that the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association reduced the wages of the native labourers by 50 per cent., when they knew that as the result of the war they should have raised wages. Then they demanded a sort of labour which everybody in this country objected to, and so had landed not only this country, but South Africa in the greatest difficulty. When a monopoly of that kind had been granted by those who had done incredibly foolish things, Lord Elgin should not be quarrelled with if an attempt were made to break up that monopoly which had brought so much disaster on the country as a whole and on the gold industry in particular. The right hon. Gentleman had condemned the New Hebrides Convention, and he frankly confessed that he had wondered as he had listened to all that the right hon. Gentleman had said in regard to it to what side of the House he would have to wander. [OPPOSITION ironical cheers.] Of course, he meant if there had been a scintilla of truth in the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman that the terms of the New Hebrides Convention had any resemblance whatever to the clauses in the South African Chinese Ordinance. But he had read every word in the Blue-books and he had the pleasure of meeting some of the gentlemen who had drawn up the New Hebrides Convention, and although he hoped that some of the conditions in the Convention would be altered later, he maintained that every one of them would have the effect of improving the condition of the labourers recruited in the New Hebrides for service out of the islands. If that were true he thought that hon. Members opposite should employ their time somewhat better than in trying again to disprove what the Foreign Secretary had shown to be the case—that every one of these clauses in the Convention would, in point of fact, and were intended to increase the well-being of the natives of the New Hebrides. What he and his friends objected to in the South African Chinese Labour Ordinance was that it violated the four following principles: that no man should be allowed to enter into a contract which deprived him of his freedom of movement, of the right to raise himself in the social scale by the exercise of his strength and skill; of the right to hold property, and of the right to continue to reside in the country. He maintained that those principles had done more for the freedom and happiness of the human race than anything since the coming of Christianity. They had been violated in the South African Chinese Labour Ordinance, but were to be found in the New Hebrides Convention. So long as hon. Gentlemen opposite sought to enforce their Chinese labour policy, so long would they be in a pitiful minority. Speaking from no partisan view he was glad that the Opposition was harking back to this question of the New Hebrides and the labourers employed there, because bit by bit they on that side were committing hon. Members opposite to pure humanitarianism. It was absurd to watch the shifts to which hon. Gentlemen were driven, but after all good might come out of evil. If hon. Gentlemen opposite approved of the repatriation of people in the New Hebrides and in Fiji they would soon get rid of their objection to a similar course being pursued in South Africa, and at last the 53,000 Chinamen there might be restored to their homes. They had the fact that the right hon. Gentleman lamented that the women who went to the New Hebrides with the men might not be the wives of the men they went with. In so far as they took up that position they joined with them in condemning the system which prevailed in South Africa which no man could contemplate without horror. Perhaps after this, hon. Gentlemen opposite might join with them in their condemnation of the treatment of the natives in Natal, to which they were not strangers but to which they had to pretend to be strangers in order to bolster up this curious case in support of Chinese labour. He agreed with what had been said that probably reforms would not have been promised in regard to this question but for the debate on the subject. They insisted that the Government should over and above all take some humanitarian view and a higher view of the dignity of man than had hitherto prevailed. He hoped that good would come out of evil, and that when we had got rid of the Chinese difficulty in South Africa—General Botha and all the Boer leaders stating that we had brought the Chinese in against their will—the Dutch leaders might set to work with us to improve the condition of the native races not only in the British Empire but throughout the world.

*MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton) said he often wondered whether it was given to any fallible human creature to be as righteous as the hon. and gallant Gentlemen opposite contrived to appear in these and cognate subjects. He argued that there was a close analogy between the case of South Africa and the New Hebrides in regard to the Conventions dealing with imported labour. He denied that there was only one thing which fundamentally differentiated the one system from the other. The question they were determining was whether there existed the same kind of moral responsibility between those who introduced Chinese labour in South Africa and those who introduced indentured labour in the New Hebrides. It was quite possible to introduce fine and finical distinctions between the New Hebrides and the Chinese ordinances, but he did not think the two cases could be distinguished. What they had to ask was whether the gravamen of the charge made against the late Government at the last general election did or did not survive in the new ordinance made by the new Government. The essence of the charge was that the man was taken from his home and that for a given period, the duration of which was beyond his control, he was placed under a master by whose power his personality was dominated and destroyed. That was the essence of the charge made in respect of Chinese labour. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies had submitted various defences, every one of which coming from a politican of his experience was more astounding than the last. He said the state of things was better than it was before the last ordinance was introduced. That was a new defence coming from the lips of a free Government who had inherited this condition of cannibalism and savagery. He would have thought that their duty was a civilising and ameliorating duty, and he did not think that such a defence should have commended itself to them. For himself he said that when they were dealing with cannibals and savages from the standpoint of moral responsibility, they should not establish and claim credit for a system not so completely immoral as that which they found. That point was raised in a question to the Prime Minister, who was evidently unacquainted with the whole subject. He had grave doubts as to whether the right hon. Gentleman's attention had been directed to any of the clauses of the Convention which dealt with the employment of labour in the New Hebrides. He was quite satisfied that the right hon. Gentleman knew nothing about the ordinance and the terms which the Liberal Party had made themselves responsible for in regard to labour in the New Hebrides, and he had therefore showed that caution and discretion which they all admired in approaching the subject under discussion. Later in the day, when he had had an opportunity of refreshing his mind, he commissioned the Under-Secretary to make a defence which turned out to be no defence at all. What was the defence of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies? He said, "You must be aware of the fact that we are dealing with France; we have a joint responsibility with France," and the argument had been repeated *ad nauseam* that, because they were dealing with Imperial questions and with another Sovereign Power, they were excused from the higher standards of moral responsibility. He could imagine a little child sold into slavery and carefully measured by hon. Gentlemen opposite, observing, "I am not as you might suppose the chattel of the Liberal Party; I am only a little victim of co-dominium." But they had to deal with this question quite apart from that consideration, and they wanted to know, and what the country would soon want to know was, why were women and children employed under these conditions of slavery? When the hon. Gentleman said there was no resemblance between the two cases he agreed, to this extent, that the Chinese system did not extend to women and children. They were dealing, however, with a novel system of indentured labour, and he wished it to be understood that it was the Liberal Party who first formally sanctioned the introduction of native women and children to labour in alien surroundings. They were told by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies that there would be an opportunity at the Colonial Conference for the Government to extricate themselves from the dilemna in which they were placed, and after conference with the Colonial Premiers they might be able to relieve themselves from their present position. But when the Colonies expressed their dissatisfaction with the policy which was being pursued they were expressly told that they could take it or leave it, but that those were our lowest and our last terms. these were the longest hours that could When the Colonies expressed their dissatisfaction with the moral conditions they were told explicitly, "Those are the ultimate terms we have been able to extract from France, and you can take it or leave it." On what basis was it suggested that the ultimatum then presented might now be abandoned? Had anything transpired which permitted the Government to introduce the ameliorating conditions? It was not possible to introduce them. The hon. and gallant Gentleman had said he would gladly see the Ordinance amended in many respects, but he had contented himself with a vague and general aspiration which was in marked contrast with those far more explicit suggestions in which he was so fruitful a few years ago. He could only hope that some speakers on the other side of the House would condescend to give some particulars and show that they, in common with the Opposition, disapproved of the Ordinance as it now stood, and assist to procure modifications only offered to them by the Government at the point of the bayonet. In many points the Ordinance was capable of correction, and they would like to know how much of it was still open to reconsideration. Was it still open to deal with the clause which permitted the engagement of female children? He did not doubt that his hon. and gallant friend would associate himself warmly with a campaign which would not merely have for its object a reform in the employment of children, but would make it absolutely impossible for any child, male or female, to be employed for three years under indenture, unable to leave that employment whether he or she wished to or not and committed to it at the unrestricted discretion of the chief of a tribe who, on the Government's own case, was a cannibal and a savage. Would the hours of labour fixed in the Convention be subject to reconsideration? The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had told them that the limitation between sunrise and sunset meant that possibly be worked, and that the object was to secure that labourers should not work all day and all night. He thought the right hon. Gentleman rather overrated the endurance of these children. He would remind those hon. Gentlemen whose moral withers were so completely wrung during the last few years that seven hours was about the duration of the tropical night, and that therefore these children could be compelled to work seventeen hours.

MAJOR SEELY: Does the hon. Gentleman say seven hours is the length of the ordinary night in the New Hebrides?

*MR. F. E. SMITH said he had taken the figure from a friend who professed to be familiar with the New Hebrides, but he would take it at ten, and would let his hon. and gallant friend save his character for consistency and morality by the difference, if he could. The point was that under the terms of this Liberal Ordinance every employer would be at liberty to employ these children from sunrise to sunset. It was no answer to say that that was a provision which need not necessarily be availed of. Was that the spirit in which the Liberal Party considered the temptation and weakness of the employers in the Transvaal? Was it really put forward as a defence that they were content to take the chance of the employers making moderate use of the powers given them? Then, as to the subject of the employment of women, was there one Member of the House who would go to his constituents and say he voted for a system of indentured labour for women?

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire) was understood to ask whether the hon. Member would prefer that the men should go without the women?

*MR. F. E. SMITH said it was not for him to indicate whether he preferred, or did not prefer, that women should accompany the men, but in the Ordinance there was provision for the employment of female children quite without the question of a wife accompanying her husband under the happy domestic arrangement which the hon. Member pictured to himself. The hon. Gentleman had apparently in his mind a happy hearthside with an indentured labourer on one side and his indentured wife on the other. When the Opposition were told by the hon. and gallant Gentleman that they were to be a pitiful minority so long as they ventilated this subject, he could only say it was a risk which they were deliberately prepared to take. He had never been able to attach the exaggerated value which the hon. and gallant Gentleman attached to the right of an indentured labourer to stay in the country in which he had been temporarily enslaved. So far as he could understand the objection the hon. and gallant Gentleman had to the Chinese Ordinance was that when the period of enforced labour was ended the *quasi*-slaves were not allowed to stay, and that in the Ordinance of the New Hebrides there was no reason why they should not stay. He could not see what importance could be attached to the option given to these people to stay in the place where they had been so long enslaved Reverting to the earlier authorities on the subject of bondage, he had always understood that when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt their grievance was that when their period of servitude was over Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let them go, not that he hardened his heart and would not let them stay. The Government had come in pledged to deal not merely with an objectionable economical system — that would have been nothing; it would have been a mere error in economics such as many of them made at different times—but the case on which the Government went to the country, and on which they succeeded, was that they were dealing with an immoral system such as no moral individual or association of moral individuals could support; and that sentiment was even yet cheered, though faintly and spasmodically, on the benches opposite. So far as the case rested on a moral basis, what were they to say of the Government, the strongest Government numerically which had ever sat in the House, which for twelve months had unrestricted power to end root and branch this immoral system, and which prematurely called into existence responsible Government in the Transvaal in order to shift from their own shoulders the burden of a responsibility to which they had not the courage to rise? He ventured to say that when the record of these matters was written the epitaph of this Government would be—"Here lies the Liberal Government which was pledged to end slavery in South Africa, but which, in the first year of its existence, indentured women and children in the New Hebrides."

*MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) said that in spite of the brilliant speech to which he had just listened, he candidly confessed that he did not understand the position of hon. Gentlemen opposite in regard to this question. He had always looked upon them as the champions of Chinese indentured labour and now he found them objecting to indentured labour in the New Hebrides. It seemed to him that their attitude was rather like that of Satan rebuking sin. They were condemning sin which they were inclined to, but which they had not the power to commit. One thing at any rate they might be glad of, and that was that the Party in opposition were undergoing an elevating process. The ex-Colonial Secretary said he was entitled to know, and insisted on knowing, the genuine convictions of those who governed. That was what they tried to get to know on the question of fiscal reform, week after week and month after month, during the last Parliament, and they could never succeed in getting any answer or explanation. If that were true, surely they were entitled to know the genuine mind of the late Government on the Chinese labour question. If the Opposition were entitled to know the genuine convictions of this Government, surely on the other hand, the ex-Colonial Secretary could now give them the reason why 16,000 licences were issued a few days before the late Government went out of office. So far as he knew, there had never been any explanation of that matter, and he would very much like to hear from the ex-Prime Minister or the ex-Colonial Secretary what the reason was for the issue of those licences so shortly before they left office. The hon. Member for Dulwich had complained of the strong language used by the Under-Secretary for the Colonies with regard to Chinese labour, and had implied that that language was a fraud, that the Government were behaving in a fraudulent manner in regard to Chinese labour, and that they had not intended to keep the promises they made at the general election. All he could say in regard to that was, "Are thy servants Tories that they should do these things?" The right hon. Gentleman wanted to know what was the position in regard to Chinese labour. He was not afraid to say what he understood to be the present position, which was, as he took it, that the Government had promised, indeed had told them, that no new licences should be issued, and that no new contracts would be made. It had been arranged as part of the Constitution, that twelve months after the meeting of the new Legislature the Ordinance of 1904 should absolutely cease. Then there was also provision made that if, by any chance, the new Government of the Transvaal should introduce a new Ordinance, containing provisions to which they might object, that Ordinance would be referred to His Majesty's Government, and he was sure if that were the case, that if such an Ordinance, passed by the Transvaal legislature, contained any provisions similar to those of the old Ordinance, it would be absolutely rejected by this Government. With regard to the question of the New Hebrides, he was certain that no one on his side of the House would shelter himself behind the Government of France in the matter. They were equally responsible with France, and they were prepared to take the responsibility. He had read the Blue-book on the matter, and he frankly acknowledged that this step in regard to the inhabitants of the New Hebrides was one intended to improve their position. There could be no doubt whatever on that point. There was no desire on the part of the Government in connection with the Ordinance to assist anyone to obtain cheap labour in the New Hebrides, and there was no taint of gold about it; the Government did not want to gain money for anybody. The object was to improve the position of these islanders in the New Hebrides. He frankly confessed, however, that he agreed with the hon. Gentleman opposite in much that he had said with regard to the Ordnance, and he could not help thinking that many horrible things could be perpetrated under it. He would like to have an assurance from the Government that if they found at any time that there was any cruelty whatever under the Ordinance, or that it was being abused in any way, they would at once approach France and get the conditions altered. He would also like the Government to examine into the whole question of indentured labour by sending out a Commission in order to see how the Islanders were being treated, not only in the New Hebrides but in British Guiana and elsewhere and then let them have a full, free, and independent report. He was sure that would be beneficial, and he, for one, would be delighted if, during the tenure of office of the present Government, they not only got rid of Chinese labour, but also put an end to indentured labour.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said the hon. Member who had just spoken had referred to the question of the licences which were granted just as the late Government left office. It had been stated over and over again, and hon. Members must be perfectly aware of it, that those 16,000 licences were issued by the authorities of the Transvaal without the knowledge of the then existing Government.

MR. SOARES: Did Lord Selborne know?

SIR F. BANBURY: Lord Selborne was not in the Government here. As a matter of fact, Sir A. Lawley issued the licences, which were not all put into execution, because the Under-Secretary, only a few days ago, said that over 2,200 Chinese had been imported in the month of January. The Government had the power to cancel the licences, but did not do so. On one occasion he was addressing an audience, and he used the information which he had seen in a stop-press telegram in the *Westminster Gazette* that it had been decided not to stop the issue of the 16,000 licences. The audience would not believe him, and practically told him he was a liar. It appeared they had sent out for the paper, but had got an edition which did not contain the telegram. He, however, promised to produce the paper containing the telegram, if they would allow him to leave the room, he might almost have said, with a whole skin. He produced the telegram on the morrow and what happened? There was not a single apology from anyone of those people who had denounced him; they treated him very much in the manner of hon. Gentlemen opposite when they appoached this question—they said that the Government could not help it, and that it was somebody else's fault. The hon. Member had said that the new Convention was free from the taint of cheap labour. Then 10s. a month was not cheap labour; though he could remember that the 30s. or 40s. a month, which was the rate of wages under the Chinese Labour Ordinance, was spoken of by hon. Members opposite and all over the country as disgraceful, and it was said that such a rate of pay should not be allowed. Now the Liberal Party and their friends had entered into a Convention under which 10s. a month was to be paid, and they did not make a minimum rate, so that there was nothing to prevent the masters of these unhappy women and children giving them 1s. a month if they chose. They had been asked why they had taken up this question of the New Hebrides Convention. The hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division had told them he was glad to notice that the Opposition on this subject were becoming more humanitarian. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies had stated that the Opposition had taken up the question because they wanted to bolster up the odious system of Chinese labour in South Africa. He would tell the Committee why they were taking it up. The real reason was that they wished to show the insincerity of hon. Members on the Ministerial side who, whilst they denounced the Chinese Ordinance, which was mild in comparison with this Convention, did só at the very time that the Government were signing a Convention which was worse. There was no other name for such conduct but hypocrisy, and it was for that reason that they were agitating this question and bringing it to the notice of the people. The hon. Member opposite had said that the Convention was free from the accursed taint of gold, but the hon. Member for Gravesend had clearly pointed out that its real meaning was that cheap labour was required for the mines in New Caledonia. It did not appear to be generally understood by the supporters of the Government that the members of the Opposition had always said it was necessary to provide labour for the main industry in South Africa, because gold was needed for the prosperity not only of South Africa but of this country, and it could not be got without imported labour. That was the reason why Chinese labour was necessary. He had maintained that position before and he maintained it now. In order to see that Chinese labourers were properly treated, they made the necessary provisions under the Ordinance. They did not include women and children and they did not fix the wages at 10s. a month. To stipulate under this Convention for 10s. a month meant that in the opinion of the Government 10s. a month was a fair rate of wages. Under the Chinese Ordinance they ensured that every Chinaman who left the shores of China thoroughly understood what it was he was leaving for, and where he was going. Officials were appointed to see that the Chinamen thoroughly understood the conditions under which they were going to work, but nothing of that kind was provided under this Convention. In the New Hebrides an exporter might approach the head of the tribe and say "How many single women have you?" There was nothing to prevent that exporter bribing the head of the tribe to hand over any number of single women without the consent of their parents, merely with the consent of the head of the tribe, and those unfortunate women might be taken abroad and forced to work from sunrise to sunset. There had been a discussion as to how long the night was in those parts of the world, but every hon. Member knew that the night was shorter there than it was here. Supposing the night was ten hours. That meant fourteen hours a day for these natives to work, with only one hour for meals. The Committee would remember that the other day hon. Members were denouncing the railway companies because railway servants were employed for more than twelve hours a day, although a good deal of the time was occupied sitting in the goods vans. Now hon. Members below the gangway were apparently going to support a Liberal Government in making natives work fourteen hours a day under an indenture. He regretted that the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies was not in the House because he understood him to say that the details regarding these natives were not in the Convention, and that arrangements could be made to alter any of the details. He would like to refer for a moment to page 55 of the Blue-book dealing with the subject, and he would quote a letter from Lord Elgin to the Governor-General of Australia, in which the Secretary of State said—

> "Most of the suggestions made are intended to supplement the Convention in matters of detail rather than to alter its existing provisions, because such a proposal His Majesty's Government would deprecate."

He would like to know how that agreed with what the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had stated. The letter further stated—

> "In the first place, it is long and elaborate, and secondly it is undesirable that it should go into avoidable detail, for the reason that any provisions embodied in it can only be properly altered by an amending Convention."

Hon. Members would remember that the Convention was excused by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the ground that it was a collection of articles simply expressing the general idea of what should take place, and that all the details could afterwards be arranged and made operative regardless of the Convention. And yet Lord Elgin said that it was inadvisable that any change should be made in the Convention, and that nothing in that direction could be actually done without an amending Convention. How they could reconcile those two contrary views he failed to see. Then the right hon. Baronet had said that children only meant people under age, but the Report referred to children, and contained the French word "enfants." He never knew before that the word "enfants" merely alluded to people under age. As far as one could tell from plain words it was children that was meant, and it meant children of any age as long as they were of a certain height. Hon. Members knew perfectly well that some children at twelve years of age were 5 ft. high, and some might be over fifteen years of age, and yet would not be more than 4 ft. 11 in. For the Government to shelter themselves behind a height standard was an absurd position and one which was not worthy even of hon. Gentlemen opposite. His hon. and learned friend had dealt very ably with the arguments of the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division, who seemed to think that if people were in a state of slavery in a certain place and it came to an end it was the height of their ambition to remain in the country in which they had been enslaved. [An HON. MEMBER: "Yes, but not in slavery."] He did not admit that it was slavery. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies had said that the Law Officers of the Crown had advised him that the article relating to repatriation did not mean that there was to be forcible repatriation. He thought, however, that he could understand plain English, and he proposed to read to the Committee the article dealing with repatriation, and then he would ask whether any ordinary mortal would suppose that the article in question meant anything except that at the end of three years the native was to be repatriated. The article provided that—

> "Every labourer who has completed his term of engagement shall be returned to his home at the first convenient opportunity by and at the expense of his employer."

He was aware that in Parliament they had sometimes had a little difference of opinion as to what was the difference between the word "shall" and the word "may," but in this particular case the words were "shall be returned to his own home." The article proceeded in the following terms—

> "Such labourer shall be taken to the place where he was recruited, or if this is impossible to the nearest place thereto from which the labourer can without danger rejoin his tribe. In the case of unjustifiable delay exceeding one month in returning a labourer, the resident Commissioner concerned or the person appointed for the purpose shall provide at the expense of the employer for the return of the labourer to his home at the earliest opportunity."

That was a perfectly clear article, and there seemed to be no doubt whatever in it. If he had any intention of going to law and could found his case upon such a clear provision as that, he would have no hesitation in going to law, in spite of the opinion given by the Law Officers of the Crown, because he did not think anyone could interpret such plain language into a declaration that it did not mean repatriation at the end of the period of three years. The Convention further provided that persistent ill-treatment was not to be taken notice of until two written warnings had been given. Apparently one warning might be given in December and another in July, but steps were not to be taken for the protection of the labourers till those warnings had been given, though the sufferers might be women. He would like to read a few extracts from that Blue-book on any platform in the kingdom, and see what the electors thought of the Government who were returned to do away with Chinese slavery, and who the very month they were returned entered into an agreement containing the clauses to which he had referred. The Under-Secretary and other Members had attempted to justify the Convention by saying that previously the inhabitants of the New Hebrides were in a worse position. He did not know whether that was true or not, but he would admit for the sake of argument that it was true. It did not seem to him that that was an excuse. It was a Convention in many ways far worse than that in regard to the Chinese which hon. Members opposite had denounced. All the excuse offered was that these people were not in such a bad position as they were two or three years ago. Supposing the Liberal Government were to find in a certain dominion under their jurisdiction real slavery as it existed in the United States of America, where a master was at liberty to kill his slave, and instead of putting an end to that slavery they came down and said, "We have allowed slavery to continue, but we have said that no slave owner must destroy his slave. They are in a much better position than they were, and therefore we are to be excused for allowing slavery to continue." That was practically the argument brought forward. The Government did not deny that the Colonial Governors had addressed remonstrances to them. That was a striking commentary on the abuse hurled at Unionists for not attending to their duties, and not knowing what was going on. The Prime Minister admitted an hour ago that he did not know of this Convention. Yet the right hon. Gentleman allowed slavery to go on without taking the trouble to inquire whether the Convention had been signed, or whether the Articles in the Convention were sound and good. He gathered from the Under-Secretary of the Colonies that he was going to consult the Colonial Premiers at the Colonial Conference as to what might be done under the Convention. It seemed to him extraordinary that the Government should take that step now, when the Blue-book was full of remonstrances from the different Colonial Governments and full of answers from the Radical Government that they would take no notice of the remonstrances addressed to them. It had already been said that the reason for this sudden change of front was the debate which had been raised. If that was so, he thought the Opposition might congratulate themselves on the steps they had taken. He wished to point out what was really their position. They did not object to indentured labour provided that it was absolutely necessary for an industry that labour should be obtained, and that the labourers thoroughly knew what their wages, food, hours of work, and other conditions of service would be. Under the Chinese Ordinance the hours were ten. Let grown men accept engagements under indenture after everything had been explained to them. But he and his friends did object to the indentured labour of women and children. He ventured to say that there was not a man in the House who would have come forward at the last election and supported even his own Government if they had desired to bring into South Africa Chinese women and children to work from sunrise to sunset.

MR. LUPTON: They are in the Chinese Convention.

SIR F. BANBURY disagreed with the hon. Gentleman. He hoped the Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board, who had made a great study of this question and who did not seem very happy, would get up and answer the remarks he had made.

*MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire) said the hon. Member opposite had laid great stress on the fact that evidence was not produced that the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association had attempted to manipulate or vary the number of labourers, and had challenged hon. Members on the Ministerial side to produce such evidence. It might interest the Committee to know that there was considerable official evidence of that having been done. In January, 1906, Lord Elgin noticed a curious variation in the figures, there being a considerable number of native labourers coming in summer, and fewer in winter. That state of things suddenly changed, and Lord Elgin asked Lord Selborne what was the reason. In his answer Lord Selborne enclosed a Report by the Secretary of Native Affairs which contained the following—

> "I am now directed to submit a statement for the period in question, viz., 30th April, 1905 to 28th February, 1906, from which it will be seen that the decrease in the labour supply on mines in the number of labourers from the Cape Colony was 9,711, from the Transvaal 7,724, from Natal and Zululand 775, from British Bechuanaland 511, and from Basutoland 1,211. . . . There can, nevertheless, be little doubt that the alterations adopted by the mines in the conditions of its labour recruitment, by insisting upon underground work and extending the periods of contract did operate as a deterrent to the inflow from the Cape Colony, the Transvaal, and Basutoland, as the natives from those Colonies have always been accustomed to short contracts from three to six months."

It was well known that no respectable native would leave his home for more than four or six months in any year, and the result of the instruction that no man should be engaged unless he would agree to work underground for a period of one year had the effect which apparently it was intended to have, of largely limiting the number of natives recruited. He would like to refer to another fact in connection with the employment of natives. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, was not always so enamoured of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association. In a telegram which the right hon. Gentleman sent to Lord Milner in 1904, he said—

> "Difficulties referred to in Brownlee's Report as being caused by recruiters representing as a month's wage what is paid for thirty working days and by misunderstandings as to the rate of wages offered and promised to natives for surface and underground work are matters requiring attention, and great watchfulness must be exercised in checking assault and corporal punishment and visiting abuses with adequate penalties."

There was good reason for the right hon. Gentleman's disquietude, because most serious allegations were made by the Commission appointed by the Cape Government. He would read one or two passages from that evidence to show the conditions which prevailed, and which were so detrimental to the requisite number of natives being obtained. This was what one of the witnesses said—

> "Native labourers are being sjambocked and beaten, and ill-treated in many other ways by their European overseers and indumas: so much so that the boys wish to call back the days of the Republic when the Boer dominated, stating that they were better treated then and received better wages for their work. This brutal treatment, combined as it is with very low wages, is enough to keep natives away from Johannesburg. Treat them fairly, pay them fairly, and labourers will flow to the labour centres."

He wished to draw attention to the fact that the highest authorities in South Africa—he referred to the Ministers of the Government of Cape Colony—stated that there was no scarcity of native labour, that it was undesirable and unnecessary for the authorities in the Transvaal to go outside South Africa for labour, and that great evils would be introduced by having resort to Chinese coolies. They stated that what was needed was patience, and that they were convinced that sufficient native labour would be available, and could be secured for working the mines in the Transvaal, and other parts of South Africa, and for all other requirements, if a fair wage was offered with considerate treatment in the way of housing and food. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the death-rate of the Chinese on the Rand was only eleven per 1,000, while the unfortunate natives died at the rate of thirty-seven per 1,000. That suggestion was not fair. What was wanted was that the natives should be better treated, and if they were the death-rate at the mines would be lowered. That was the view of Lord Milner, who, in a despatch of 5th February, 1904, stated that the high rate of mortality in the mines was the weakest point in their armour, and that the death-rate ought to be enormously reduced. The moral to be drawn from that was that they should not employ Chinese coolies, but improve the conditions under which the natives worked and make them more wholesome and decent. Notwithstanding all that, the natives were still being paid a lower wage by 25 per cent. than they were in 1897. He did not regret that this discussion had arisen in regard to Labour Ordinances, although he was not concerned as to whether the New Hebrides Convention was worse or better than the Chinese Ordinance in the Transvaal. Personally he did not like any of the Labour Ordinances. What he wanted was to get back to the higher standard once held in regard to human liberty. The late Mr. Milner-Gibson once gave in the House a definition of slavery. It was—

> "To get possession of men that we may make them work for us for our own profit, or to take possession of the fruits of their labour, is equally and always slavery; there is no difference but in degree."

That was the common result of these Ordinances, which deprived men of their liberty, and then by all kinds of regulations tried to obviate the evils which arose therefrom. He contended that they destroyed our ideas of freedom and of the right treatment of human beings. It was curious, too, to note that all these systems of indentured labour occurred not in self-governing Colonies, but in Crown Colonies. There was no indentured labour now in any of the self-governing Colonies excepting Natal. That had come about because the people of the Crown Colonies had had no say in the matter, and they were easily persuaded by interested parties who were in haste to be rich that the salvation and prosperity of the Colony were dependent on these artificial and unhealthy systems. Moreover, they had a demoralising effect on the officials, for very soon they found the officials proposing in South Africa to refuse to allow coloured men to hold land. Fortunately British traditions still lingered in the Supreme Court, and the Chief Justice held that a coloured man was as much entitled as a white man to hold land. However, again the officials, with the sanction of the High Commissioner, proposed an Ordinance to take away the right of a coloured man to hold land. To the credit of Lord Elgin he was glad to say the Colonial Secretary refused to sanction that Ordinance. Another illustration was the treatment of Indians, who had been banished in hundreds by a stroke of the pen simply because they were coloured, although British subjects. We never allowed the Executive in this country to banish an individual; that could only be done by the operation of the law. The treatment of the Indians in the Transvaal was far worse under the officials than under the Boer Government. So demoralised were the officials that they again introduced an Ordinance which imposed great disabilities on the Indians, to which Ordinance the Lord High Commissioner gave his sanction. Lord Elgin vetoed that Ordinance and it fell to the ground—a decision from which Lord Selborne strongly dissented, and remonstrated passionately in regard to the particular part of it which permitted an appeal against a decree of banishment by the magistrates. Was it the desire of the House of Commons to impose those restrictions, and destroy the liberty of British subjects in that manner? He came to a more serious matter which affected the majority of the inhabitants of the Transvaal, and illustrated the demoralisation of the superior race who got possession of men in order to enjoy the fruits of their labour by making them work for them. We were the trustees of the native population of the Transvaal, who were led to rely upon us for justice. Mr. Chamberlain had stated that their treatment under the late South African Republic was extremely brutal, and the late Lord Salisbury, and Lord Lansdowne made similar statements. But what had we done to them? We employed them in the war as scouts and drivers, and they acted with great fidelity; but no sooner was the war over, and we were in possession of the country than we first disarmed them, next oppressed them, and finally subjected them to spoliation. We began to tax them enormously. He found that the whole of native taxation in 1903–4 did not amount to more than £342,000, whereas only a year afterwards it reached £653,178, or 50 per cent. more than the taxes on the rich gold mines, and nine times per head what it was in the Cape Colony. He thought these figures were extremely significant, and he estimated that the taxation in the Transvaal of the natives was four times per head what it was in Basutoland. In the Transvaal he estimated that the whole cost of native administration did not amount to more than £200,000, whereas we were imposing taxes to the amount of £650,000. We were therefore taking from the natives for the benefit of the rest of the population, £450,000. But not content with that there was worse to come, because we had imposed a further tax of £1 per adult upon natives occupying Crown lands. But we did not stop there; we had gone to the extreme limit of imposing compulsory labour upon these unfortunate men, contrary, as he contended, to the provisions of the Sand River Convention and the Convention of 1881. Compulsory labour was one of the chief causes of the Matabele War, and in regard to Natal the difficulty had arisen through men being taken away and being paid half the current rate of wages. A Commission appointed in 1905 pointed out the very serious results attending compulsory labour. What was the result of all this? We said to the Boers that we would not permit slavery, and yet we had introduced a system which, according to Sir Richard Martin's Report, was regarded by the natives as the introduction of slavery. Our honour was involved in this matter, and our pledges should be fulfilled. Even what he had stated did not exhaust the catalogue of the evils which had been imposed on these unfortunate men, the natives, since our rule commenced. They had been deprived of their rights in their ancestral lands, and the natives on the Crown lands, under a decree that had been issued, were liable in the Transvaal to be turned off without any compensation and without any provision for their existence elsewhere. It was really astounding that such a thing should be possible. It was not less extraordinary that British subjects should be treated in this manner by a stroke of the pen merely by the decree of the Executive. He thought that was a question that needed some investigation. 180,000 natives had been subjected to this penalty and they were the very natives with regard to whom it was provided by the Conventions of 1881 that they should have reserved for them locations where no white settlers were to be. It was laid down that the white settlers should be taken out of the reserves when they were found there and provided for by the Government. We had entirely ignored that provision, and the natives for whom we provided under the Convention of 1881 were now deprived of the land to which they had been entitled from time immemorial and were also disarmed. These facts had been absolutely ascertained, because he had a letter from Lord Selborne to the Secretary of State in which he admitted that an order for compulsory labour had been issued in 1905 but had been withdrawn in December 1906, but the other conditions remained, and it appeared from this letter that the natives were to be placed absolutely at the mercy of anybody to whom their own ancestral land could be assigned and they were to make their own terms. He did not think injustice could go further or that this House would support an act of such an unjust and gross character. We had come under obligations to these men by having disarmed them. When the Boers were still in control the natives had, at all events, their arms, but to-day they had nothing. A petition which they had sent was not even allowed to reach us, because he observed the words "not printed" in the Blue-book. One would not accuse Lord Selborne of inhumanity, but the noble Lord found himself in an unfortunate environment. When the High Commissioner went out to South Africa he found himself among a community who were demoralised by the introduction of Chinese labour, and he committed himself to their view before he became conversant with the circumstances of it. The illustration of Chinese labour was an admirable one. At Cape Town there was a calmer atmosphere, there were no natives in the near neighbourhood so that no violent antipathies existed there. A native policy had been pursued in Cape Colony for many year sand had been carried on with great success. There were no native troubles and no Indian troubles in Cape Colony. The Indians had a vote there and could in that way right any grievance they had, whilst the natives had representatives to look after their interests. In fact, there had been far greater development in Cape Colony than in any other part of South Africa, and he maintained that it was desirable to make use of the experience gained in that Colony and to associate ourselves with the policy that had been pursued there. If the High Commissioner were resident in Cape Colony he would in such an environment be much freer to pursue a calm policy. There was now no necessity for a High Commissioner in the two Colonies, because there the Governor would now be the person in whom the power was vested.

He therefore submitted that the time had come when the transfer of the High Commissioner to Cape Town might well be made. In that way we should be able gradually to extend the more intelligent and humane policy adopted by the colony towards all the native tribes of South Africa. This matter was of immense importance to us, because not only had we a large obligation to protect the natives but we had also in South Africa a large number of troops who would have to bear the brunt of any rising that took place. The Government and the Liberal Party were returned with a mandate to give up the somewhat violent method of war and the assertion of racial supremacy, and to change the rule of the sword for that of wise and patient statemanship. He urged the Government by wise statesmanship to conciliate these people. The principle of good government was absolute justice, but in South Africa we had had the rules of justice and the sentiments of humanity set aside when they were thought to be opposed to the immediate needs of the State. But this was no justification in the light of morality or what was the same, of far-sighted policy.

*Mr. J. WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said that as one elected to represent labour he had been very much interested in the discussion which had taken place on this new form of indentured labour. He could have quite easily understood the opposition if it had come from those representing the democratic ideas of labour in the House, but he was quite unable to understand it coming from the members of the Opposition who were responsible for the Transvaal Chinese ordinance. He understood that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen upon the Opposition side had not retired from their position that that form of indentured labour was the correct form of labour. The senior Member for London recently said he was in favour of indentured coloured labour wherever it was needed; hence it must be taken for granted that that was a form of labour in which they believed. That being so, how those who sat in opposition could oppose the particular form of indentured labour under the Convention in regard to the New Hebrides he failed to understand. The late Secretary for the Colonies said he believed the experiment of Chinese Labour in South Africa was the only thing that could be done under the circumstances and that it was a most useful institution for developing the new Colonies; therefore all this opposition to the scheme that had been arranged between this country and France was a sham in his (Mr. Ward's) opinion. If they must have indentured labour either in South Africa or in the New Hebrides, the principle was the same. It was either bad altogether or good altogether, and if they defended it in South Africa it was impossible and illogical to oppose it elsewhere. In the early part of 1896 the British Labour organisations issued a manifesto when it was seen that the mine-owners intended war in South Africa because there was a shortage in the supply of mine workers. That manifesto, which was signed by some hundred trade union officials, declared that the sole reason why a war was being engineered was for the purpose of securing a supply of cheap labour for the Rand mines. They were then told in reply that it would be a splendid opportunity for British workpeople who were unemployed to find work and a splendid opportunity for British enterprise, and what made Chinese labour stick in the throats of the average Britisher was that he was so patently deceived from beginning to end, while labour was rejected and a system of semi-slavery introduced to take the place of fairly well paid native labour that had previously existed under the old Boer *régime*. He deplored the creation of a monopoly in recruiting, and thought the best argument against the Rand Native Labour Association was that since it was instituted wages had dropped by one-half. If the Government would only prick that bubble a little more and give every group of mine-owners the right to recruit labourers, the competition thus produced would result in wages rising. Therefore he entirely agreed with the policy of the Government in that matter. As regarded Chinese labour, the real question, he thought, was whether or not these men lived under conditions which were entirely wrong to European ideas. Economic necessity was no argument. There were certain industries in this country, certain mines which could be made to pay if serf labour was introduced. If no moral question was involved, if it was only an economic question they were called upon to decide, they could defend almost anything of that kind. If it was a question of pay only, if no moral questions were involved, if it was only a matter of economics, then they could swallow almost anything on that basis, in regard to labour supply. But he thought the trade unionists in 1896 were right. This cheap slave labour during the last election was universally condemned by the British people by their vote; and he had thought that it would have been a long time before any Government would attempt to employ or sanction that form of labour again. He was certain that a great mistake had been made. The question with those gentlemen who wanted to employ the coloured races for their own special benefit and profit was not whether the British Empire gave the greatest happiness to those who came under it. To him it always appeared that the question with them was whether they could get bigger interest for their money. He expected that his hon. friend the Member for Gravesend would call it "economic necessity," but he did not use quite such a polished phrase as that, though it meant exactly the same thing. If they could get cheap labour of any kind it was good business; let them get it at the lowest rate possible. In that lay the crux of the whole business. The Rand Labour Association had a complete monopoly of labour supply, and it was impossible to have healthy competition under such conditions. It was asked how it was that the present Government had not altered the conditions at Kimberley. Though the Opposition had had the power for many years, yet they had not dealt with the compounds at Kimberley. But surely the example of Kimberley was not one to set up as an ideal either in respect of the conditions of labour or of human society. It was not an example for a democratic Government to follow. Taking all these things into consideration and after the debate they had heard that day, he thought they must come to the conclusion that it was time they should go back to higher standards of conduct between white men and the coloured races. It must be recognised that they were men who were entitled to exactly the same treatment as ourselves. What was unjust as between two white men bargaining was equally unjust as between a white man and a coloured man. He was obliged to confess that he thought His Majesty's Government had made a mistake in regard to the New Hebrides Convention. But it was those who supported right hon. Gentlemen opposite, those who had clean hands, who had the right to complain, and not the official Opposition. He understood that it was a rule of Courts of Law that those who complained should be able to show clean hands. Surely the hands of hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway were not clean; they would require a great deal of whitewashing. Modifications of the Convention had been promised, and he thought that the discussion would be productive of good. He hoped that the Government would avoid those old, barbaric, and unjust ways of dealing with subject races that came under the sway of this great Empire in favour of more enlightened and honourable methods in the future.

*MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham) said he agreed with the words of the hon. Member for Stoke and also with the spirit in which he had uttered them. He believed that what he had said commended itself to many men who sat on the Ministerial benches. It seemed to him, as to the hon. Member, that any complaints on this subject should come from Radicals and Labour Members rather than from hon. Gentlemen opposite, who had all along condoned and encouraged indentured labour, to which Radicals and Labour Members were opposed. For his own part, in regard to the treatment of natives, he did not see much difference between the two Front Benches. It was the fashion of Governments, not only ours, but all European Governments, to deal with natives and native races as though they were a little lower than the animals; and what he hoped was that out of this discussion would come perhaps a greater desire on the part of men of all Parties to do some justice to those who had been placed by Providence under our control. He would like to contrast the treatment of natives by our own Government and our Colonial Governments with the treatment of natives by the Government of India. The Government of India would never allow coolies to be recruited under the conditions which we and the Colonies allowed in times gone by. The Government of India would immediately put its foot down and say "No; no one of our subjects shall be recruited under these harsh and unfavourable conditions." On one occasion when such conditions were suggested, the Government of India put its foot down in opposition to the Imperial Government and immediately stopped the recruiting. In the Transvaal when on a similar occasion coolies were requisitioned from India, the Government of India stepped in and said they could not give their sanction to the conditions. In regard to the New Hebrides Convention, there were some things which could hardly be explained away except on the assumption that the Colonial Office had not looked very closely into the matter. It was due to the fact that many things went through Government Departments which were not likely to be carefully scanned by the heads of departments. He was of opinion that if the Opposition had been in power the New Hebrides Convention, right or wrong, would probably have been a good deal worse than the present Convention. The position of Members on those benches, and of Labour Members, was one of dislike of all conventions and such ordinances, whether in the New Hebrides, British Guiana, or the Transvaal, and the sooner we came to the conclusion that the whole system of indentured labour should be revised the better it would be. The fact was that in recent years our treatment of native races had rather worsened than bettered, and members of the Opposition and the late Government had set a very bad precedent and a very bad example. If we looked to our own Dominions it could not but be admitted that the treatment of natives in the last ten years had been lowered and degraded. Incidentally he might refer to the abolition of the *status* of slavery in Zanzibar. Although the Leader of the Opposition had promised this, and although it had been promised by both Front Benches, we had not yet seen it an accomplished fact; but he hoped that it would not be long before the Government would be able to make a pronouncement on the matter, because he firmly believed that if the Government once made a promise they would keep it. The old feeling which animated those who employed slave labour in the past, a feeling which still survived in the Southern States of America, was more or less evident in our treatment of the natives in Natal and the Transvaal. So far as they could be employed for the creation of wealth, we were prepared to treat them as kindly as we would treat our horses or our dogs; but the moment they claimed to live their own life, and that claim seemed to clash with what we regarded as the superior rights of the white man, that moment we relentlessly put into operation our favourite and guiding principle, that right was might. The old doctrine that "the King can do no wrong" had been re-stated "the Colonies can do no wrong," since the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had been Colonial Minister. Those who read Sir William Butler's book learned that in his view the troubles in Natal were largely due to interference with native rights, and the writer went further and implied that the demands that were being made in Natal were designed to create another native rising, with a view to the wholesale confiscation of native lands. He was not stating his own views, but the views of those who had inquired into this matter on the spot. If that spirit were encouraged we should be laying up a store of trouble for the future. The natives occupying Crown lands in Natal were subject to certain conditions of occupation, and had now to pay £2 per annum in addition to a hut tax, and they ought not to be dispossessed of their land. It was the same with regard to Crown lands in the Transvaal. A great deal had been said about the New Hebrides which concerned about 2,000 natives, but in South Africa they were dealing with millions. On the Crown Lands in the Transvaal, where there are about 180,000 natives, every native paid to the Government as landlord a rental of £1, and also a poll tax. The squatters upon those Crown Lands were not necessarily men who had recently settled, but they were termed "squatters" simply because they were residing on Crown lands not formally set apart for native locations. If those Crown lands were disposed of, the natives had to make the best terms they could with the owners, and the danger was, and the Commissioners admitted that danger, that the owners would use their power to exact both rent and labour far beyond what was just. Many land speculators had purchased Crown lands and were still purchasing them with a view to squeezing the utmost out of the native tenants. Absentee landlordism was as bad in South Africa as it was in Ireland, and added to the evils of absenteeism they had the unjust conditions imposed by the owner and the sense of insecurity which must always be an effectual bar to progress on the part of the native. The process of the disposal of Crown lands was putting unbearable pressure upon the native, and it had been stated over and over again by those who knew South Africa well that that pressure was and had been intended to provoke an outbreak of violence and rebellion which would remove the last excuse for confiscation on a large scale. One of the recommendations of the Commission (not unanimous by any means, for he understood that there were three dissentients) was that sanction for native occupation on Crown lands should not be given unless an adequate rent was charged to the native occupier based upon the producing value of the land. Such a recommendation interpreted by those who were anxious to see the natives dispossessed simply meant that whatever their rights by length of occupation, they must either submit to pay the rent charged by the Government or by the owner who had purchased from the Government, accepting at the same time any other conditions which might be imposed, or else leave the land which was in the strictest and truest sense their inheritance. It had never been denied that the natives must always be the predominant race so far as numbers were concerned. Surely then it should be the policy of any Government to see to it that every protection was given to the millions of coloured people who, even from the labour standpoint, were such a mighty asset to our South African Colonies. The attempt to use the natives purely as the "Nethinim," the hewers of wood and drawers of water of South Africa without regard to our professed policy, which seemed to be sadly forgotten, of welding together all races under the British flag, was sure to meet with a richly deserved failure. The whole policy of the treatment of native races must be revised and our administration must be established on a basis which would be all the firmer and more lasting because founded on principles of humanity and justice.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) desired to bring before the Committee a matter which affected the reputation of a Civil servant of long standing, and also, as he thought, the honour of the Colonial Office, if not of the British Government. He referred to the action of Sir Alexander Swettenham in the proceedings subsequent to the earthquake at Kingston. He had not put down any Motion to reduce the Vote, because that would seem to be offering opposition to the policy of the Government and would have made the subject a Party question. He believed the policy of the Government as it stood was a wrong one, but it was the result of a series of mistakes, of false information, and of local intrigues of which Sir Alexander Swettenham was now the victim. He did not know the Governor before he saw him in Jamaica, and he brought the matter forward only in the public interest. He would only speak of that of which he had been a witness, and what he was about to say he felt sure would be confirmed by other Members of the House of Commons who were present. There was the hon. Member for Bristol, and especially the hon. Member for York, whose courage and adventure on that memorable night, if related, would read almost like a romance. He asked the Committee to call to mind the suddenness and the horror of the situation in which the Governor was required to act. A town about the size of Northampton was reduced in about fifteen or sixteen moments to a complete wreck, and the scenes of horror, death, and mutilation could not be described. In those times men's nerves were shaken and remained shaken. He saw strong men visibly trembling for hours, and some of them for days, after. For some reason which he could not explain his nerves were not shaken, and consequently he was able to take a cool survey of the situation. In the midst of that terrible scene he took out his watch and saw it was 3.33 of the clock. What were the duties of a Governor in such a sudden and dreadful emergency? The first duty was to preserve the town from the violence which often followed panic. The same afternoon the Governor had done that with the forces at his command. A man with confidence in himself, he inspired confidence in all around him. The second duty of the Governor was to succour the wounded. His difficulty was to secure room in which to place them, and he applied for the room on board the ship "Port Kingston" to Sir Alfred Jones, who had been shamefully attacked — [Mr. CHURCHILL: Hear, hear] — not by the American citizens, but by those American excursionists—those "bounders" who were, unfortunately, found in every country. Sir Alfred Jones replied promptly—

> "My ship, its doctors, stores, food, appliances' the whole of the officers and crew are at your disposal."

And immediately barges full of the wounded put off to the ship, till it was crowded. About a dozen only of the passengers regained the ship that night, he himself among them; the bulk of them, from 100 to 200, were at the hotel four or five miles off, and the captain sent messages to them saying they must stay there. Thus not only was everything done for the wounded, but it was done atthe expense of the passengers' comfort and safety. He mentioned that to show that not only was everything done for the wounded but that it was done at the expense of the passengers' comfort. Owing to the action of the Governor, there was no want of food, and tens of thousands of homeless people were housed in tents and shelters on the racecourse, and Lady Swettenham, with Lady Dudley and Mrs. Arnold-Forster, and other ladies, spent the night ministering to the sufferers. That was the state of things on Tuesday morning, when he went through the town and saw all he had described. So thoughtful was the Governor that he sent word to the American Admiral to refrain from firing the ordinary salute, as the sound of the firing would startle the sufferers. That salute was fired owing to a mistake which was afterwards explained. Under what accusation did the Governor stand at the present time? He himself had no knowledge of international law, and he did not know whether it was right for a foreign Admiral to land troops in one of our Colonies without the permission of the Governor; but that was done. An American armed force was landed without the Governor's knowledge or consent. As soon as Sir Alexander Swettenham heard of it, he insisted that it should be re-embarked, as he was capable of coping with every emergency. To his mind Sir Alexander Swettenham acted as became a British Governor. Had he done otherwise it would have been said that the American force had saved the situation. The coloured people acted exceedingly well. There was a great deal of pillaging for food and loot in the shops, but disorder was amply provided against by the Governor. A British officer told him that the pillaging was a case for the whip, not for the rifle. American officers took a different view, and if an American armed force had landed and had seen the black people pilfering, they might have used the rifle, not the whip. The vast coloured population might thus have been goaded into violence, which might have developed into insurrection. All that was avoided through the firmness of the Governor. Then the Governor had been condemned upon the letters. To his mind the letters were but an incident in a great duty well performed, There might be an error in style, but they should not form their judgment of work bravely and well done by that. There were two letters on that occasion. They heard nothing about the first. It was from the American Admiral, and if they were going to judge by errors in style they would find as great errors in the Admiral's letter as in that of the Governor. In fact it was the terms employed in the Admiral's letter that brought forth the reply of the Governor. Admiral Davis in his letter said—

> "I landed working parties both ships to-day. I purpose landing parties to-morrow unless you expressly do not desire it. This party recovered a safe that was stolen from a jewellery store. I judge from this that the police are inadequate to protect private property."

The Governor had already assured him it was adequate, but he appeared to have thought himself the best judge. It therefore appeared that the Admiral wanted to use his own judgment over the head of the Governor who, in the circumstances, was the proper man to judge. Sir Alexander Swettenham replied—

> "Should be glad to receive safe, etc., close to sentry post where nothing is known about it. The American V. C. knows nothing about it. Police adequate. Your working party was helping Mr. Cresswell to clean out his store. No doubt private owners glad of assistance to save expense."

That letter was cynical if they liked, but it should be remembered that it was called forth by a cynical statement. Then Sir Alexander Swettenham went on to make the remark, a jocular parallel case to that which had been so much condemned—

> "Supposing in New York some lawless people were sacking the house of a millionaire, would that warrant the British Admiral landing British troops to support the New York police ?"

The two men were friends throughout and parted in a friendly manner. The Governor said he would accept supplies of any kind, but would not assent to an armed force being landed. He himself visited the hospital and found that the wounded were being carefully and properly attended to. Admiral Davis, wiring to his superior, Admiral Evans, before the correspondence took place, said he found Governor Swettenham a man of great power, and that he had assured him that there was no need of police protection or relief. He added—

> "I landed fifty men to prevent mutiny in the penitentiaries."

But there was no meeting, and the Governor insisted on the men being recalled. No one doubted the good intentions of the American Admiral, but he, like others, had been misled by false information given by intriguers, to whom he (Mr. Collings) would refer in a moment. Admiral Davis wired to his superior, Admiral Evans—

> "The situation here is confusing and conflicting. Stories, complaints, and rumours too contradictory to enable me at present to form a clear judgment of actual situation."

He submitted that it was the Admiral's duty to accept the Governor's statement and assurances as to what was then considered to be the position of affairs; but the fact was that the intriguers won the day. Sir A. Swettenham's splendid conduct had met with universal approval on the island, and for that splendid conduct the Governor had had to suffer. He had two letters, one of which he thought had not been published, and he believed the Colonial Office had no copy of it. He had got it from a good authority quite unconnected with the Governor. That authority gave him the following statement—

> "On January 17, Admiral Davis promised to withdraw his troops. His officers persuaded him to land them the next day, but at noon of that day, after seeing the Governor, he did withdraw them. Two of his officers saw a newspaper reporter, and stated that the Admiral had been insulted by the Governor. The newspaper man went away immediately to the Mayor, obtained from him the annexed letter, and took it on board the "Missouri."

> "Sir, on behalf of the Mayor and Council, as well as all the citizens of the stricken city, I desire to express my deep and sincere regret that any unpleasantness should have arisen to cause you to decide to withdraw the valuable assistance which you have voluntarily and so generously been rendering to this country and my unfortunate citizens. Whatever may have been the cause that has induced you to decide to withdraw, we deeply regret it, and we do not approve or take any part in it; so we ask you not to withdraw your valuable assistance, or take offence at the conduct of one man, if, at a time when overwrought by responsibility and calamity he has acted in a manner that he himself will regret on reflection; and in particular I ask you not to let the sick, wounded, and destitute call in vain for the comfort which until now they have been receiving from your hands, and for which I and they thank and bless you."

That letter was signed, C. W. Tait, Mayor of Kingston.

The following was the letter which Admiral Davis sent in reply to the Mayor's letter—a letter honourable alike to the American Admiral, and to the English Governor—a letter which he gave on the condition that it should be published, but which was practically not published as it appeared in only a very limited number of copies of a Paper as an "inset"—

> "U.S.S. Missouri."
> Kingston, Jamaica.
>
> "SIR.,—Your hon.'s communication of this date, in the name of yourself and the council as well as all the citizens of Kingston, is received. I beg that you will understand that I am not withdrawing my squadron from Kingston by reason of any unpleasantness, any misunderstanding, or any cause of offence. I came here to render first and immediate aid. I could only remain for a few days, and within that time I have done all that lay in my power to do, and all that the representative of His Majesty's Government has required of me. As a foreign naval officer I am bound to respect the wishes and requirements of the supreme authority of this island. I have left an emergency hospital at Winchester Park, which I believe to be in good working order, under the supervision of the American Jesuit Fathers. If I were to remain indefinitely, there would, I know, be an abundance of work for me to do, but under the circumstances, having fulfilled the object of my mission, viz., to render first and immediate aid, my duties oblige me to withdraw. I am particularly anxious to remove the impression that there has been any misunderstanding between myself and the constituted authorities of Jamaica, and sincerely believe that the work of restoration will progress, and I express to you my wish that your city may rise again from its ruins and find its former prosperity. I thank you for your expressions of appreciation of such services as my officers and men have been able to render, and I have the honour to be, etc.,
>
> "C. H. DAVIS.
> Rear Admiral,
> Com. Detached Squadron, U.S.A."

That letter, owing to intrigues, had been practically suppressed, because it showed that no insult had been offered to the American Admiral and that feelings of animosity between the Admiral and the Governor did not exist. In this connection he had to regret the action of the British Government. Acting under a false impression the Foreign Secretary sent a communication to the American Government practically apologising for the conduct of the Governor. On the same date the Minister for War without waiting for official information, but acting solely on newspaper reports, sent what was practically a censure upon the Governor. All these appeared in the American newspapers, which poured the foulest abuse on the Governor, calling him a fool, incapable, and he knew not what else. Immediately when the Governor saw these, and the Colonial Secretary would verify the date, he sent in his resignation. What other action could any high-minded gentleman, conscious of having discharged his duty, have taken under those circumstances than to send in his resignation? The Press of Canada held a very different opinion from His Majesty's Government, who had acted too hastily on newspaper reports. He read from a Toronto paper which contained an article full of praise of the Governor's conduct. There was a part of the people of this country who always supposed their own people to be wrong, but he believed the House of Commons, the country, and the Government were in favour of fair play. Before sitting down he would ask what was necessary to be done, to relieve a Governor of a Colony, whose splendid action could not from the point of view of efficiency be criticised, from the stigma which had been thrown upon him. As the matter stood resignation was discreditable to the country and ought not to be persevered in. The country would demand that some restitution should be made to Sir A. Swettenham, not only as a matter of justice to him, but to show to men serving the State abroad that they would be sheltered from slanders, lies, and wicked statements.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No one wil deny that the subject brought forward by my right hon. friend is one of great interest and importance, and no one could speak on the point with greater personal experience and knowledge than he; but think I the Committee would rather reserve what they have got to say on the subject of Jamaica and its Governor to some other occasion than interrupt the particular discussion which has been going on during the greater part of the evening. Under our standing orders only one night can be given to the Vote on Account, and as the Prime Minister desires to speak before the discussion comes to an end at eleven o'clock, it lies with me to make as tolerably fair a division between us as I possibly can of the short time that remains. I should like to make some comments upon the answers attempted to the indictment of the Government's policy in South Africa which was advanced by my right hon. friend the late Colonial Secretary earlier in the evening. But though the temptation is great, I abstain from yielding to it, and in the few remarks I feel justified in making I shall confine myself strictly to the questions raised by the New Hebrides Convention. If time availed I should pass no such self-denying ordinance. I come to the question of slavery, whether in Africa or elsewhere, which has been raised in this debate, and I cannot do better than begin by referring to the speech made by the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division. I am bound to say that the hon. and gallant Gentleman, who always shines in our debates, shines much more when he is attacking slavery than when he is defending it. He has a great natural love of freedom with which we all sympathise, and when he gives full play to those honourable emotions, though we may differ from the particular arguments which he uses, we sympathise with the general spirit that animates his purpose.

MAJOR SEELY: You had a funny way of showing it a few years ago.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and gallant Gentleman does me a great injustice, for I admired his speeches then much more than I do now. But when he stands up in the unaccustomed character of apologist both for a Government and for slavery, he plays a part which is so unusual, and so rare with him, that naturally he plays it without finish, without perfection, without enthusiasm, and without fire. But as he has given much study to this question let me comment on the four characteristics of slavery which he for the first time has laid down as the main incidents of that *status*.

MAJOR SEELY: No, I have laid them down again and again.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Oh, I did not mean that the hon. and gallant Member had not laid them down again and again; but that no one had done it before him; that slavery, which is a well-understood term, historically, socially, and juridically, never had before the interpretation which he puts on it for the purposes of these debates. Let us take his definition. Apparently one of the essentials that characterise slavery is that the slave should not be able to do what he likes with his spare time. I believe that some of the most cruel conditions of slavery have been consistent with this liberty—conditions under which the slave was submitted to torture and to the absolute will and control of his master, and was yet allowed to do what he liked with his spare time. It is not a characteristic of slavery. Of course it was simply invented in order to deal with the compounds. It had no other object.

MAJOR SEELY: It was invented by Lord Mansfield in 1834.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A man, he says, is in servile conditions if he be not allowed to leave the compound when he is not at work. In the first place, that makes the Kimberley mines slavery. But the hon. and gallant Gentleman does not think that the New Hebrides conditions have a servile tinge, because there are no compounds. The indentured labourer is allowed to do what he likes with his leisure time—in other words, during the hours of the night between sunset and sunrise, the indentured child labourer is allowed to go where he pleases. The hon. Gentleman seriously says that that puts the Chinaman in a servile condition and leaves the indentured labourers of the New Hebrides in a free position. Is not that playing with words? Is it not mocking the reality of the situation? The next mark of slavery discovered by the hon. Member is that anyone who is not in a servile condition can raise himself in the social scale. If the Chinaman can accumulate money, and does so, in the Transvaal, then when he returns home, if money gives a rise in the social scale in China—I do not know if it does so or not—then that rise is at the command of the Chinese labourer indentured in the Transvaal gold mines.

MAJOR SEELY: I spoke of a rise by engaging in higher forms of employment, which is prohibited to the Chinese labourer.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What happens to the Chinaman is this—that he can, under certain conditions and for a few years, make money, which enables him, when he returns, to rise in the social scale in a manner which would be impossible if he remained at home. Then what is the third test of slavery put forward by the hon. and gallant Gentleman? He cannot own land or real property. Well, in the United States nobody can own land except a citizen of the United States. If I go and reside there to-morrow and retain my British citizenship I cannot own a foot of land there; but am I in a servile condition on that account? Then the fourth point of the hon. and gallant Gentleman was the subject of repatriation; and here I come into some collision with the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who dealt with this point. I maintain there is no distinction in the matter of repatriation between the Ordinance relating to the Chinese in the Transvaal and the Convention relating to the New Hebrides. Will the Committee permit me to read the two sentences which respectively refer to the Chinese Ordinance on the one hand and the Convention relating to the New Hebrides on the other? I shall not say which refers to the one and which to the other, and if hon. Members will not look at their Blue-books I will ask them to guess which refers to the one and which to the other. Here is one—

> "The labourer shall be returned to his home at the first convenient opportunity."

Here is the other—

> "The labourer shall be returned without delay."

Can the right hon. gentleman, without referring to his book, tell me which sentence refers to the Chinese and which to the New Hebrides? I am quite sure he cannot. He has Law Officers who are prepared to say that "shall" means "may." Now all the Law Officers whom I have had to do with have asserted that "may" means "shall," but I have never heard them maintain that "shall" meant "may." If "shall" means "shall" then it means "shall" in both instances, and the Government who settled the question had before them the whole controversy which had been raging through the country, and must have known that when they put in "shall" there was only one interpretation.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) rose, but——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said: I would most gladly give way, but time is so short the hon. Member must spare me. If there was anything required to make the conclusions at which I have arrived coercive it is the phraseology of the Pacific Islanders Labour Act of 1880; it is closely germane to the point. Observe the phraseology used by those who then had to deal with the situation—the clause runs thus—

> "At the expiration of the engagement of any labourer his employer shall either cause him to be returned to his native island, or, if he does not, he shall pay £5 to the emigration agent."

That, observe, is exactly carrying out what the Government say is the meaning of this Act. They had it before them, must have had it before them, when they agreed to the Convention. They had the two forms, that in the Chinese Ordinance and that in the Pacific Islanders Act. The latter expresses what they now say they meant to express, the Chinese Ordinance expresses what they say now they did not want to express, but they followed the language of the Chinese Ordinance and deliberately avoided following the Pacific Islanders Labour Act. I do not know if many hon. Gentlemen now present listened to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs this afternoon; if they did I will venture to say there is not one who did not realise that every word he was saying was an after-thought, and was not in contemplation at the time when the Government entered into the Convention with France. The proofs of this statement—strong, I admit—are overwhelmingly conclusive. The Government now tell us that their Convention is a minimum which is to be modified by rules and regulations. But they never thought of that on the first night of the debate; they never thought of it on the second night of debate; and they never thought of it when discussing the question with the Australasian Colonies. Not only did they not take their present view, but they took precisely the opposite view; and Lord Elgin has explicitly committed himself to a statement of policy which is absolutely inconsistent with the view laid down by the Foreign Secretary. It will be in the recollection of the House that the Australasian Colonies protested against certain parts of this labour convention. They made suggestions for its alteration. How does Lord Elgin deal with that proposal? His way of dealing with it will be found on p. 55 of the Blue-book at the bottom of the page—

> "Most of the suggestions made are intended to supplement the Convention in matters of detail rather than to alter its existing provisions, and such proposals His Majesty's Government would deprecate. In the first place, it is already inevitably long and elaborate; and, secondly, it is undesirable that it should go into avoidable detail for the reason that any provisions embodied in it can only be properly altered by an amending Convention."

But what Lord Elgin says in so many words must be obvious to anyone who is accustomed to interpret international or legal documents. I do not think that the law officers will support the Foreign Secretary. Does anybody imagine, for example, reading the provisions of this Convention, that it is in the power of any local authority to alter the clause which says that women and children may be indentured as labourers? The right hon. Gentleman told us that a child was anyone under twenty-one. The right hon. Gentleman is wrong. I believe from some points of view in English law anyone under twenty-one may be described as an infant; but when the word "child" occurs either in an Act of Parliament or in an international instrument it certainly does not mean people under twenty-one; and I am informed—though in this I am no authority I need hardly say—that the French *enfant* has equal authority with the English version, because they are of co-ordinate value in this matter. The French *enfant* is certainly not confined in this way, and, though it is possible in a Convention to make regulations as to what height a child is to be, a child can be any age, however tender, so long as it reaches that height. There is one other question which I would ask the Prime Minister, who is going to follow me. It is whether he seriously thinks the terms of the Convention can be modified by local arrangements on the spot. One of the things the Australian Colonies complained about, and which Lord Elgin said could not be altered without a new Convention, was that certainly most remarkable provision to the effect that it was not until the unfortunate indentured labourer had three times complained of ill-treatment that anything was to be done on his behalf. Now, you have only to read the words of the Convention to see that it does not lie with the local officer to determine. It is there in black and white; it is there protested against in our Australian Colonies. It is there in Lord Elgin's statement that it cannot be altered without a new Convention; and then the right hon. Gentleman comes down and tells us that it is a *minimum* which can be made into a desirable *maximum* by administering the enactment. Sir, it cannot be altered in all its worst features, excepting new arrangements be come to between the Governments; and I ask the Prime Minister who says he never heard of the Convention until the first night of the debate——

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought the right hon. Gentleman said so.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I said I never studied it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: At all events I wish to ask the Prime Minister this question, whether this desire to turn the *minimum* into a *maximum*, this desire to modify the terms of the Convention, which they would not do for the Australasian protest, ever entered their heads until a protest had come from a different and more pressing quarter. Was it until the debate on this subject began on the first night of the session that it ever occurred to the Government? Can they produce a shred of documentary evidence to show that they consulted with anybody—the Australian Government, the French Government, the local authorities, the authorities in Fiji or anywhere else, as to the modifications in this Convention? They cannot, of course. They never thought of it. The Prime Minister now tells us that he knew all about the Convention. He never thought of it. The Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Secretary were both parties to the Convention. They never thought of it. These are the people who have gone about stumping the country on the subject of Chinese slavery. It never occurred to them until dealing with the actual business of the country that this sort of provision was contrary to their own professions of faith until the fact was rung home to them. The truth is that the word "slavery" as now used by hon. Gentlemen has no moral significance; it has only a party meaning. It does not refer to a *status ;* it refers to a controversy. If indentured labour is provided by a Unionist Government, if the people who benefit are owners of goldfields, and the people indentured are Chinese—that is slavery [Cheers]; yes, but if indentured labour is arranged by a Radical Government, if the indentured labourers are not Chinese, but people far less capable of protecting their own interests and if those who benefit by the indentured labour are people less important than the great industry on which the whole prosperity of the Transvaal depends, then that indentured form of labour is not slavery—it is social reform. I do not admire the policy of the Government; I do admire the flexibility of their terminology.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The Committee will have observed the alacrity with which the right hon. Gentleman gave the go-by to South Africa.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It was entirely in consequence of a personal appeal made to me on the right hon. Gentleman's behalf that I took the course I did.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I will put it somewhat differently then. As the right hon. Gentleman was aware that he must give the go-by to something in his speech, he selected South Africa. He therefore did not launch out into his natural admiration of Chinese labour in South Africa—I mean natural as one of the authors of it—except by incidentally and parenthetically referring to it when he came as he thought to the more burning question of the New Hebrides. But I cannot part so easily with South Africa, because of the extraordinary statement made by the hon. Member for the Dulwich Division. He, using language which I think is pretty strong, even for the present condition of the House, accused us practically of having gerrymandered the Constitution of the Transvaal and bribed the Boers with an advantage in the Constitution in order to secure a verdict against Chinese labour. This is the sort of thing that is said in the House of Commons, at a time when the whole country are rejoicing at the successful result—(Cries of "Brigg!")—of what I do not hesitate to call the noblest example ever set by this country. Having practically vanquished our enemies in the field, and they having become subjects of His Majesty, we gave them liberty, and in many quarters that had not always been sympathetic to the view taken largely on these Benches of South African questions—to the great delight of many such persons, the Boers have succeeded in forming a Government. This is the result, it is said, of gerrymandering. What are the facts? To begin with, one main fact was that the Progressive Party, as it is called, only struggled for three more prospective seats than it obtained. The Progressives were supported by 17,694. They gained twenty-one seats. The Nationalists, Independents, and Labour men—the other class of British, non-Progressive British, gained 19,788 votes, or 2,000 more than the Progressives, and Het Volk 23,769; and if we take the number of seats gained and divide these figures by them, the votes per seat of the Progressives are 842, the votes per seat of the Nationalists 1,063, the votes per seat of the Independents 4,096, of the Labour men 1,738, and of the Het Volk men 880. Thus the Progressives actually polled fewer men per seat than any of the other parties. If the hon. Member can discover anything unnatural or artificial or gerrymandering in that, he is a cleverer man than even I thought him. I pass now with the right hon. Gentleman to the subject of this Convention as to the South Sea Islands, He was rather fierce in his appeals to me, but he was nothing to the hon. and learned member for the Walton Division of Liverpool, who put conundrum after conundrum to me and

> "Gorgonized me from head to foot.
> With a stony British stare."

He twitted me with ignorance on a previous occasion. On a previous occasion I had not had the opportunity or the time to study the whole Blue-book, but on the ground of my ignorance I avoided expressing any strong opinion to the House on the subject. But there is something worse than ignorance. There is the "little learning" which is "a dangerous thing." The hon. and learned Gentleman told us quite civilly, but with an air of superiority, that he belonged to a profession in which they were accustomed to interpret words and legal phrases, and therefore he thought he knew all about this Convention; but he left out of his sight the fact that there is something besides legislation in this matter. There is administration. This Convention, as has been stated by my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, really represents the *minimum* of safeguard against abuse. It is the skeleton which has to be filled in, not by the collaboration of this country, but by the careful action and supervision of the Commissioners and inspectors who will be appointed in great numbers to see that there is good treatment meted out to the emigrants and to see that much more than the *minimum* of comfort and good treatment is given to them. Much is made of the fact that women and children might be employed. In 1888, I believe, a Conservative Government was in power, and on that occasion a Polynesian Immigration Ordinance was passed, regulating the admission of this very class to Fiji; and I find in Clause 24 there is not a word said about women. It is assumed throughout that if men go, women may go, as is the case in every Ordinance that has been passed, whether by one Government or another, except in the case of the Chinese Labour Ordinance. Here is Clause 24—

> "No immigrant shall be recruited for service in the colony who shall be less than twelve or more than forty years of age."

So that twelve is really the age that was laid down by the Conservative Government in 1888; and I think their advisers were right—alleged ages not being much to be depended upon—to take size, height, and other characteristics as the best test. But I do not suppose that anyone would expect that women or girls, especially of twelve years, would by themselves be admitted, and, if I mistake not, there is an actual provision in the Convention against women being taken unmarried. But the truth is they are passed from one island to another and these transfers, with which we are now dealing, will practically be confined to the group of the New Hebrides themselves. If they go to New Caledonia their recruitment, on being landed there, will be superintended by the representatives of the French Government, not by us. If they go to Fiji they will go under this Fiji Ordinance I have quoted which, as it is the work of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, must be excellent. They will, therefore, not be subject to any of these alleged dangers; and they are to be recruited for field labour; and for field labour in that climate women and children are well fitted and to it they are well accustomed. Contrast the case of your Chinamen. What have you done in South Africa with you Chinese labour? The great difficulty with our labour in many of these parts is this terrible problem how to deal humanely and yet with proper discipline and order with the natives. But you go out of your way in order to get cheap labour from a distant part of the world to work underground. They are men whom the communities among whom you are introducing them detest, and will not allow to continue to mix with their population and remain permanently amongst them; and you are driven into that system of segregation and imprisonment which I will not waste any words in describing. In the New Hebrides, on the other hand, you are dealing with a state of things already in existence, where the population are constantly migrating from island to island, constantly treated with barbarity and hardship. You step in to protect them as well as you can under this Convention. You lay down in this Convention the minimum, as I said, of safeguards required, and you appoint offiecrs at every point, both on the journey before they start and after they arrive at their destination, to see that they are properly dealt with. Who is to compare the one with the other? They have no relation, no similarity whatever. Hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to be very great opponents *pro hac vice* of anything in the nature of indentured labour. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] Why are we asked to go to the country and say we are in favour of women being subjected to indentured labour? That is sarcastically thrown at our heads. I have explained the extent to which women are involved in this matter. They go mostly to live with their husbands and their children. [Cries of "No."] With regard to the Party opposite, I have quoted the Fiji Ordinance, but I can cast my mind back a good many years—to, I should say, the year 1875 or 1876—when a Minister had to be removed from his position in a Conservative Government because he stood up and defended, and acted upon his defence of, domestic slavery in Western Africa in the face of the House of Commons. Surely it is not altogether repugnant to hon. Members opposite—it ought not to be, at any rate—to enter into a defensive engagement of this kind intended to control and regulate and bring into proper order the traffic which already exists, which is not very great in extent, but which is already in existence. And for my part I would say that, having made myself well acquainted with the Ordinance now, I see nothing which needs either apology, excuse, or explanation on our part.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 107; Noes, 283. (Division List No. 39.)

AYES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, RtHn.A.J.(City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Hon. Guy (Winchester)
Barnes, G. N.
Barrie, H.T.(Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowerman, C. W.
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt.Hn. Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.

Chamberlain, RtHn.J.A.(Worc
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Collings, Rt.Hn.J(Birmingh'm
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Charles Curtis (Antrim,S,
Craig, CaptainJames (Down,E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, Col. H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hervey, F.W.F(BuryS.Edm'ds
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Jowett, F. W.
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Grady, J.
Parker, SirGilbert (Gravesend)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pease, HerbertPike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John FrederickPeel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Richards, T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, S.(Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seddon, J.
Sheffield, SirBerkeley Geo. D.
Smith, Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool, Walton
Stanley, Hn. Arthur(Ormskirk)
Starkey, John R.
Summerbell, T.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomson, W.Mitchell (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Walsh, Stephen
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Ayes.—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N. E.
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A.Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn.HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A.(Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,Sir JWilliams (Devonp'rt
Benn,W (T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, SirJ.H(Essex,Romf'rd
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Buxton, Rt.Hn.SydneyCharles
Byles, William Pollard
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt.HnRichardKnight
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clarke, C. Goddard
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Coats, SirT.Glen(Renfrew, W.)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cogan, Denis J.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, SirWm.J(S.Pancras,W.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Davies, David (MontgomeryCo
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.
Dickinson, W.H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Frank, (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Samuel T.
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Col. Alan (Hereford, S
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane. Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.

Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen, W.
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, ColonelIvor(Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Leese, SirJosephF(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J.M(Falkirk B'ghs)
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal, E.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meehan, Patrick A.
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, CharlesN(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philp
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shanghnessy, P. J.
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, Robert (Staffs. Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Col.Ivor(S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B(Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, SirG.Scott(Bradf'd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-und.-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Major J. B.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Sutherland, J.E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Thomas,Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds, S.)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported to-morrow; Committee to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the Motion for the Adjournment,

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY, Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey) gave notice that to-morrow the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule would be moved.

Adjourned at sixteen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 12th March, 1907.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways [H.L.].

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [H.L.]. The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The order made on the 28th of February last discharged, and Bill committed for Tuesday next.

West Riding Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Reported, without Amendment.

Royal Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Medway Lower Navigation Bill [H.L.]; West Yorkshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Folkestone, Sandgate, and Hythe Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

Newquay and District Water Bill [H.L.]. The consent of the Prince of Wales signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments.

Manchester Ship Canal (Various Powers) Bill [H.L.]. The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]. Report of the Board of Trade on the Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]. Ordered to be laid before the House. (The Lord Granard (*E. Granard*).

Humber Conservancy Bill [H.L.]. Report respecting. Laid before the House (pursuant to Order of this day), and to be printed. (No. 14.)

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AUSTRALIA.

Report of the Royal Commission on Old-age Pensions.

CHARITY COMMISSION.

Fifty-Fourth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Regulations for the preliminary education, training, and certification of teachers for various grades of schools, 1907.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES FUND (IRELAND) (NON-CONGESTED DISTRICTS).

Account for the year ended 31st December, 1906. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

TRAWLING IN THE MORAY FIRTH.

The Earl of ONSLOW: My Lords, in the absence of my noble friend, Lord Heneage, I beg to put to His Majesty's Government the Question standing in his name—viz., whether they will lay on the Table of the House the orders to be issued to the commanders of the cruisers in the service of the Scottish Fishery Board, in relation to British subjects under contract of service with the owners of foreign vessels; also whether similar orders have been issued by the Admiralty to naval cruisers on the coast of Scotland.

*Lord HAMILTON of DALZELL: My Lords, I am able to give the noble Lord the information for which he asks. In fact, it was given by my noble friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the speech which he made on this subject a little more than a fortnight ago. The instructions to be observed are as follow:—When the officer commanding a cruiser detects a trawler under a foreign flag trawling within the waters of the Moray Firth he is to obtain full information as to the operations of the trawler, such information to include all the facts that would be necessary for successful prosecution in the case of a British trawler detected under like circumstances; with this addition, that every person on the vessel, of whatever rank, who uses or assists in the use of the method of fishing known as beam or otter trawling, should be included in the report. This instruction has been issued to the cruisers of the Scottish Fishery Board, and——

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by a Member.

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: The statement made to the House by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs was that they should be included in the report "with a view to individual prosecution."

*LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL: I have just referred to the Report in *Hansard* of my noble friend's speech. The noble Marquess is quite right. That is, of course, the object of obtaining the information. This instruction has been issued to the officers commanding the cruisers in the service of the Scottish Fishery Board, and a similar instruction has been communicated to the officer commanding the only Admiralty vessel engaged in this duty.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I rise only for the purpose of expressing my hope that these instructions will be carried out in a cautious and considerate spirit, because I think it is quite clear that our fishermen are placed in a somewhat difficult and invidious position owing to the action of the Scottish authorities in this matter. What has happened is this. I understand that one or more Norwegian vessels have been found trawling outside the three-mile limit, but within waters which we desire to treat as if they formed part of the territorial waters of this country. There can be no doubt that the action of the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland, in convicting these persons, was quite in accordance with their duty. The Court had not to consider questions of international policy, but the strict question of the construction of an Act of Parliament; and, dealing with it in that manner, they came to the only conclusion at which, in my opinion, they could arrive.

It seems to me that His Majesty's Government also dealt wisely and appropriately with the case when they directed that the masters of the vessels should be released and that the fines should not be enforced, because it is clear that municipal legislation of this kind could not be enforced against foreigners found outside the territorial waters of this country. Therefore, up to this point, if I may say so, I think the best has been made of a very bad job. But the result is unfortunate, because it gives, in the case of two fishing vessels doing the same act in the same manner and in the same place, complete immunity to the vessel which happens to be foreign, while a Scottish vessel incurs the full penalty of the law. That may be a result which cannot altogether be obviated; but I may remind the House that it is a result which was foreseen by the late Lord Salisbury when this question was discussed in 1895. He pointed out that that was a risk which we should inevitably run.

Now, my Lords, we come to what I might call the second chapter of the story, which is even more perplexing than the first chapter. We have now to consider how we are to deal with any British subjects who may be found on board one of these foreign vessels. Let me say at once that it seems to me that in a case where there is a deliberate and flagrant evasion of the law, where a Scottish vessel, for example, equipped with Scottish capital and manned by Scotsmen, shelters itself under a foreign flag in order to do something in contravention of the municipal law of this country, there can be no doubt that the authorities would be right in taking advantage of the state of the law in order to proceed against that vessel to the best of their ability. But there are other cases which are less simple.

In listening to the statement of Lord Heneage the other evening, what I understood was that on board some of these vessels, which really were Norwegian vessels and had not been colourably transferred, there were to be found one or two British subjects, who had taken service on them under contract and were obliged, therefore, to obey the instructions given to them by the skippers, and that it was against these unfortunate people that proceedings were now to be taken. That seems to me to be pushing the law rather far; and what, a little, alarms me in the wording of the instructions which have just been read to the House is this—that they seem to contemplate that the local police vessels should make it their business to intercept foreign fishing vessels, search them for British subjects, and then proceed against those subjects with the utmost severity. That procedure may sometimes be inevitable, but it does seem to me to be a matter that should be handled with very great tact and caution.

I am bound to say that I have at the back of my mind a suspicion that the Scottish authorities and the Foreign Office are not exactly of one mind as to the manner in which the case should be dealt with, and if I may venture to give a word of advice I would recall the old saying attributed in the early days of the Volunteers to a member of that corps. One Volunteer said to his neighbour, "You are out of step," and the next man replied, "Then change yours." If anybody changes step in this matter I hope it will be the Scottish Office, and not the Office represented by my noble friend.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I am very sorry that I arrived at the House just too late to put my Question myself, and I am indebted to the noble Earl for asking it in my name. There is one question I should like to put to the representative of the Scottish Office—namely, whether it is in the power of a cruiser belonging to the Scottish Fishery Authorities to board a vessel outside the territorial waters and to inquire as to whom they have on board. It is quite clear that the men who are to be prosecuted next Monday would never have been prosecuted at all, their names would never have been known, if it had not been for the fact that the Scottish Fishery Board's cruiser boarded the vessel when they wanted to prosecute the skipper, and then they got the names of the men.

If international law as indicated by my noble friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is correct, they had no right to board these vessels or to interfere with them in the North Sea. The instructions now given to the cruisers apparently contemplate the boarding of foreign vessels in the North Sea, for it is the North Sea, although it has been formally enclosed by the Moray Firth by-law. I must remind the Government that the great difficulty we had when we first began trawling in the North Sea was the difficulty of foreign countries boarding vessels which they said were inside territorial waters, but which we said were outside. It appears to me that, if this is persisted in by the first maritime nation in the world, we shall have reprisals, which will bring up the whole of these quarrels again. You are going to risk the closing of one-fifth of the North Sea in order to preserve 2,000 miles in the Moray Firth, which is of no use to anybody except a few longshore fishermen engaged in a decaying industry.

I have heard different opinions as to the effect of the reply given yesterday. Very acute minds have taken the view that the Scottish Office have abandoned their prosecution of these men on whom summonses were served for being on the vessels at the time the skippers were prosecuted. But I do not read it in that way. I think that the summonses now in the pockets of the men, who are walking about idle at Grimsby at this moment in consequence, are to be proceeded with under municipal law. If they are going to be withdrawn, notice should at once be given to the men.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, it must have occurred to your Lordships that in the conversation, both to day and yesterday, you are discussing a subject which is to come before a tribunal next Monday in regard to the prosecution of certain individuals; and I cannot forbear from saying that in my opinion it is very inconvenient, and of the worst example, that Parliament should interpose, just before a Criminal Court is going to give its decision, for the purpose of discussing the very subject that is going to be tried before that Court. I respectfully submit that to the consideration of the whole House. I am going to say nothing in regard to the persons who are to be tried on Monday beyond this—that if they are innocent of any intention to break British law, I sincerely hope that British Courts will regard them with tenderness and consideration, as everybody would wish.

But on the question of policy something surely ought to be said. What is the question? It has been created by an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1889. I make it no reproach to the noble Marquess that he was a party to the passing of that Act. No doubt he and his colleagues thought that it would work of itself. But it has not. By the Act certain local authorities in Scotland could close under a by-law all fishing within the waters of the Moray Firth between two headlands which were eighty-five miles apart. It is the obvious contention on the part of other nations—and it is very difficult to encounter—that if you try to make by-laws under your own law in regard to waters within a line from headland to headland eighty-five miles apart you may be accused of trying to legislate for the high seas. You may also be charged with prohibiting other nations from doing what all other nations have a right to do—namely, to fish on the high seas. That is exactly what has happened.

Certain Grimsby vessels were transferred to the Norwegian flag. It was then lawful to transfer vessels to the Norwegian flag. The vessels were owned by a Grimsby company, and the skipper and crew were nearly all Grimsby men. That was treated by the Norwegian Government as a fraud upon their law, and an Act was passed by the Norwegian Legislature five or six years ago to put a stop to the practice, because it enabled subjects of a friendly Power to violate the laws of their own country under colour of the Norwegian flag.

Then came the prosecutions in Scotland last year, and it was determined by the Court that they had nothing to do except to obey the Act of Parliament. They have nothing to do with International law. If an Act of Parliament is passed here, unlike the United States, for example, Parliament is sovereign, and the Courts of law have nothing to do except to obey the Act. Therefore they did obey the Act, and convicted the foreigner because he was fishing within those prohibited waters. Shortly afterwards a number of Grimsby vessels came into the Moray Firth. It will not, I suppose, be disputed that they were, many of them, substantially British ships with British crews, who knew just as well what they were doing as anybody else. And they were doing what the foreigner was not doing. A foreigner might say, "I am not bound by British law on the high seas;" but a British subject cannot say that; his obligation is to obey the law whatever it is and wherever he is. Whatever may be the international question as between Norway and this country, as between a British subject and a British Court of justice, the duty of the subject is to obey the law of his country.

If it should turn out to be the case—I am not going to assume it is—that these Grimsby people are habitually and knowingly using the Norwegian flag, I should not hesitate to say that they are using it to defy a British Act of Parliament, and it is not right that they should be allowed to do so. If it is true that there is a movement that a number of these ships should appear together by concert in the Moray Firth for the purpose of violating the law, sheltering themselves under the Norwegian flag, and invoking international law in order to justify themselves, what Member of this House would say that they ought not to be prosecuted? Persons who are innocent, or have acted unwarily, ought to be treated with tenderness, and, for my part, I think the people who are more to blame are those who instigate them. It is a shabby thing for British subjects to shelter themselves under the law of a foreign country, and thereby to get their own country into trouble by an abuse of the foreign flag, and although those who have been engaged as subordinates ought not to be excused if they have deliberately broken the law, I must say I should like to get at the principals.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Five o'clock, till Tomorrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 12th March, 1907.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the County of Northumberland (Hexham Division), in the room of the Hon. Wentworth Canning Blackett Beaumont, now Baron Allendale, called up to the House of Peers.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing

Order 62 has been complied with, viz. :—Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway (General Powers) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 63 has been complied with, viz. :—Boston Spa Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Grays and Tilbury Gas Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Divorce Bills.—Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Cave, Sir David Brynmor Jones, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Joseph Leese, The Lord Advocate, and Mr. Solicitor-General were nominated Members of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill; Marriages Provisional Order Bill.

Read a second time, and committed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).

The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS informed the House that the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills not being appointed to meet until Thursday next, the parties promoting the Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill, which was set down for consideration upon the first day of the meeting of the Committee, had appeared before him and proved that the evidence of Zachariah Hornby, tug-master, Hull, was essential to their case, and that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House.

Ordered, That Zachariah Hornby do attend the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills on Thursday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.

"That, in the case of the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements), Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the condition that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 1A, 2, 2A, 2B, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 9A are struck out of the Bill :—That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill on the condition that the following Amendments be made in Clause 6 of the Bill, namely—

(*a*) The omission of the words "at their own cost," in the second line of the Clause;

(*b*) The omission of so much of the Clause as requires that the works shall be carried out under the superintendence and to the reasonable satisfaction of the engineer of the promoters, and provides for the determination of differences between the said engineer and the corporation by arbitration; and

(*c*) The omission of Sub Clause (2) of the Clause relating to the payment by the corporation of liquidated damages.

That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the Channel Tunnel Railway Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the condition that all reference to the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company is struck out of Clauses 57, 58, and 59 of the Bill :—That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

"That, in the case of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'Lord Edmund Talbot and others, the Trustees of Providence (Row) Night Refuge and Home,' the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

Resolutions agreed to.

CHANNEL TUNNEL RAILWAY BILL.

Report [this day] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read;

Bill ordered to be read a second time.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour; from Bradford; Chickerley Heath; Heage; Manvers (No. 2) Branch; and New Moss Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA AND CHINA (OPIUM TRADE)

Petitions for suppression; from Dunoon; and, Wilmslow; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Egginton, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dunoon, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

Petition from Morpeth, against; to lie upon the Table.

MONASTIC AND CONVENTUAL INSTITUTIONS.

Petition from Dunoon, for Government inspection; to lie upon the Table.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (METRIC SYSTEM) BILL.

Petition from Reading, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Gloucester, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES FUND (IRELAND) (NON-CONGESTED DISTRICTS).

Account presented for the year ended 31st December, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UGANDA RAILWAY ACTS, 1896 AND 1902.

Account presented, showing the money issued from the Consolidated Fund under the provisions of the Uganda Railway Acts, 1896 (59 and 60 Vic., c. 38), and 1902 (2 Edw. 7, c. 40), and of the money expended and borrowed, and securities created under the said Acts, to 31st March, 1906, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie pon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 74.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Regulations for the preliminary education, training, and certification of teachers for various grades of schools [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AUSTRALIA.

Copy presented, of Report of the Royal Commission on Old-age Pensions [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ALIENS (NATURALISATION).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address, 28th February; *Mr. Herbert Samuel*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 75.]

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Newport (Isle of Wight), and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of shops within the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Judgments of the Divisional Court, Court of Appeal, and House of Lords in the case of the King *v.* the County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 9, 1907).

Copy presented, of Agreement between the United Kingdom and Switzerland, respecting Commercial Travellers' Samples, signed at Berne, 20th February, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DEATHS FROM STARVATION OR ACCELERATED BY PRIVATION (LONDON).

Address for "Return of the number of Deaths in the administrative county of London in the year 1906, upon which a coroner's jury has returned a verdict of Death from Starvation or Death accelerated by Privation; together with any observations furnished to the Local Government Board by boards of guardians with reference to cases included in the Return (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 304, of Session 1906)."—(*Mr. Talbot.*)

FOREIGN TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Return ordered, "of Monthly Accounts relating to the Trade and Commerce of certain Foreign Countries and British Possessions."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

POST OFFICE (LIVERPOOL AND HONG KONG MAIL CONTRACT).

Order [6th March] for a Return relative thereto, and Orders [6th March] that the said Return do lie upon the Table and be printed, read, and discharged;—and, instead thereof—

Post Office (Liverpool and Hong Kong Mail Contract).—Copy ordered, "of the Contract, dated the 2nd day of February, 1907, with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the conveyance of the Mails between Liverpool and Hong Kong, for the period from the 7th day of April, 1906, to the 6th day of April, 1908, together with a copy of the Treasury Minute thereon, dated the 27th day of February, 1907."—(*Mr. Runciman.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 76.]

ARMY (RECURRENT EXPENDITURE).

Address for "Return showing approximately the Recurrent Army Expenditure provided for in the current Estimates (1907-8), classified (with due proportionate charges for administration, pension, transport, etc.) under the following heads and sub-heads—

(1) Mobile defence—

(*a*) Troops Abroad (exclusive of India) available for field service.

(*b*) Troops at Home available for field service at Home or Abroad.

(*c*) Troops at Home available for field service at Home only.

(2) Fixed garrisons—

(*d*) Abroad (naval bases and coaling stations).

(*e*) Naval ports at Home.

(*f*) Commercial ports at Home, including Woolwich and London.

(3) The annual interest on the Expenditure under the Military Works Loans Acts:—

(*g*) Fixed defences and their garrisons.

(*h*) Field Army.

(4) The establishments on which the tables are based.

To be accompanied by an explanatory Memorandum."—(*Mr. Bellairs.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Grant for Fishing Pier at Ballaghalem, County Clare.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the Bill will be introduced to enable the Clare County Council to avail of the money allocated to be spent on the fishing pier at Ballaghalem, county Clare.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I hope to introduce a Bill on this subject at an early date.

Fixing of Second-Term Rents in County Cork.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Land Commission are aware of the complaints of the tenant farmers of the Charleville, Buttevant, and other districts in county

Cork, in reference to the fixing of second-term rents by Sub-Commissioner Baggott on a high basis; is the Commission aware that he has in many cases fixed rents ranging from 45s. to 50s. per acre on ordinary lands in these districts; and whether, in view of the fact that purchase terms are to be based by Estates Commissioners on the rents so fixed, the Head Land Commission will take any steps in respect to this Commissioner's method of fixing these rents.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that they have received no complaints from tenant farmers in Cork to the effect indicated. The judicial rents in the cases referred to were fixed by the Sub-Commission Court of which Mr. Baggott is the lay member. The Land Law Acts require such courts to hear the evidence offered by the parties in each case, to have regard to the interests of the landlord and tenant respectively, and to consider the circumstances of the case, holding, and district. If either party is aggrieved the proper remedy is to appeal.

Dublin School of Art—Appointment of Head Master and Head Mistress.

Mr. GWYNN (Galway): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at what dates respectively the posts of head master and head mistress of the School of Art in Dublin became vacant; what temporary appointments were made to replace these teachers, in addition to the staff who previously assisted them; what economies have been effected by the Treasury at the expense of the School of Art by keeping these posts open; and with whom does the responsibility rest of appointing or failing to appoint.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The post of head master of the Metropolitan School of Art became vacant on the 15th August, 1905, immediately after the appointment of the Committee to inquire into the work carried on by the Royal Hibernian Academy and the Metropolitan School of Art. The post of principal art mistress became vacant on the 31st July, 1904. The question of continuing this post was considered in connection with the reorganisation of the school, and was deferred, together with the reorganiastion of the school, pending the results of the inquiry, and during the Session 1904–5 no temporary appointment was made to replace the occupant of the post. During the Session 1905–6 the Department appointed three special teachers to assist the existing staff, and this arrangement has been continued during the present Session. The duties of head master have been performed since the 15th August, 1905 by the second master. The sum surrendered to the Exchequer up to the close of last financial year in respect of the salaries of the head master and principal art mistress was £588 16s. 9d. The responsibility of making appointments to these posts rests with the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Agrarian Crime in County Clare.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the charge of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland to the county Clare grand jury dealing with the state of the county and the fact that thirty persons were living under police protection; and what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have seen the Lord Chief Justice's address to the Clare grand jury. The area affected by agrarian disturbances in that county is comparatively small, and the return of crime submitted to the judge at the recent spring assizes shows six cases of agrarian crime as against nine for the corresponding period of last year. I have, however, directed special police arrangements to be made in that area for the maintenance of order. The increase of crime in the county is of a non-agrarian character, the return submitted at the recent assizes showing seventeen such cases as against ten for the corresponding period of the preceding year. Even this increase is to be regretted, and the condition of the county will continue to have my careful attention.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the remarks of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, in charging the grand jury at Ennis on Monday last, as to the demoralised and lawless condition of many parts of the county of Clare, also to the remarks of Mr. Justice Kenny, in opening the assizes at Leitrim on the same day, as to the increase of specially reported cases of intimidation and boycotting in the county of Leitrim; and what steps he proposes taking to put a stop to this state of things.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have dealt with the first part of this Question n the Answer which I have now given to the hon. and gallant Member for East Down. As regards the state of county Leitrim, I would refer the hon. Member to the full Answer which I gave to similar Questions on Thursday last.† I am glad to say that since I gave that Answer the proposals of the Estates Commissioners for the sale and purchase of one of the most disturbed estates in the county have been accepted. I trust that this result will have a beneficial effect outside the estate in question.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of Mary Moran.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any complaint has reached the Estates Commissioners as to the refusal of that body to give to Mary Moran, niece of the evicted tenant, the farm at present held by George Burnett, on the Cusack estate, county Longford; and will this case be referred to the inspector for a Report.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have no record of the receipt of any complaint on this subject. Mary Moran's application for reinstatement was fully investigated by the Commissioners before they arrived at their decision in the case, and they do not consider any further inquiry to be necessary.

Release of McCann.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in reply to a memorial addressed to them in July last, the Lords Justices of Ireland promised that when McCann had completed one year of the sentence imposed upon him they would favourably reconsider the memorial of his release; whether he is aware that the year has now expired, and that, at the assizes held on 4th March at Longford, Mr. Justice Madden stated that the county was in a most satisfactory state; and will he now ask the Lord-Lieutenant to release McCann, as promised by the Lords Justices.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that the Lord-Lieutenant has already ordered this man's discharge on licence.

Payment of Rates by Landlords of Tenements under £5 Valuation.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed by the Granard Urban Council, calling upon the Government to introduce legislation making it compulsory on landlords of small tenements under £5 valuation to pay rates for same; and can he hold out any hopes that this will be done.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I beg to refer to the Answer given by my predecessor to a similar Question, put by the hon. Member for West Cavan, on 4th April last.‡ I am unable to hold out any hope of legislation in the matter.

Position of Mr. Edward Mitchell.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if Mr. Edward Mitchell has been appointed to a position under the Estates Commissioners or under the Agricultural Department; if so, at what salary; if the terms of his appointment permit him to take part in political meetings; if this gentleman moved a resolution at a Home Rule meeting in Strabane on the fifth instant; and what action will be taken.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxx., 998.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, clv., 476.

Disturbances in County Roscommon.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, because a large grazier, at Lecarrow, county Roscommon, did not give up his farm at the dictation of the United Irish League, a band of about 100 leaguers and their friends, accompanied by a band, proceeded on Sunday in the direction of the farm for the purpose of intimidating the grazier; whether, on being ordered by the police to return, they refused and an affray took place; and, if so, whether any arrests have been made.

Mr. HAYDEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on Sunday the 24th ultimo, as the Kilteevan band was passing from a meeting at Knockcroghery to St. John's, in the county Roscommon, the members were stopped by the police and the drum kicked and broken by Constable Cauley; under what authority the police acted in preventing the progress of these young men, and by what right the constable caused injury to their property; whether he will be called upon to make good the damage done; and whether a charge of any kind is, or can be, preferred against the members of the band.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The incident referred to in these two Questions, took place on Sunday the 3rd instant. I am informed by the police authorities that a band, numbering with its followers about fifty persons, was proceeding towards the residence of a person who is obnoxious by reason of his occupancy of a grazing farm. The police, who had previously warned the leaders that the band would not be allowed to approach the house, stopped the party, whereupon some attempts were made to push past the police. Some scuffling ensued, in the course of which Constable Cauley stepped upon the drum. There was no affray, no assaults were committed, and no arrests were necessary. The action of the police in stopping the band was taken under the orders of their officer, who was satisfied that this action was necessary in order to prevent intimidation.

Crime in Counties Clare and Leitrim.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will print and lay upon the Table of this House the charge of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland to the grand jury of county Clare at the opening of the assizes in that county, and also the charge of Mr. Justice Kenny at the opening of the Leitrim assizes.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Answer is in the negative. Apart from other reasons, the Government have no information as to the judges' addresses to grand juries beyond that which may be gathered from newspaper reports.

Drainage of the Scariff River, County Clare.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the necessity for drainage in connection with the Scariff River, county Clare; and if he will take the matter into consideration and cause inquiries to be made in the locality.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am aware that the local drainage committee applied to the Irish Government some time since for aid to a scheme for improving the Scariff drainage system. The application, with others, will receive full consideration in connection with the report of the Arterial Drainage Commission, which has recently been presented. In the meantime it does not appear to be desirable to institute local inquiries.

Sale of the Nagle Estate, County Clare.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Nagle estate, at Kilnabay, county Clare, has been sold; and whether any arrangements have been made to divide the grass lands amongst the tenants whose farms are uneconomic.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have made a provisional offer for the purchase of this estate, and the owner has signified his willingness to accept it. Formal proceedings for the sale are about to be instituted, and as soon as these have been completed the Commissioners will proceed to allocate the untenanted land.

Uneconomic Holdings on the Wills Sandford Estate.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that the Congested Districts Board purchased a farm known as Willsgrove, on the Wills Sandford estate, in county Roscommon; and whether, in view of the fact that around this untenanted land there are several occupiers of small uneconomic holdings, he will take care that their claims are considered in connection with the division of this land in preference to migratory tenants, as otherwise later on they must be migrated to make their holdings economic.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The estate in question, which is situate in a non-congested district, was purchased by the Board for the benefit of congested districts. The Board's first duty is to provide for the wants of tenants in congested districts, and having done so they are empowered under the existing law to enlarge the holdings of neighbouring occupiers in non-congested districts, provided that the rateable value of such holdings does not exceed £5. The question whether the Board's powers should be extended, so as to enable them to enlarge holdings under £10 valuation in non-congested districts, is to receive consideration from the Royal Commission on Congestion. The Board are not yet in a position to make arrangements for the disposal of the Willsgrove farm.

Sale of the Neligan Estate, County Cork.

MR. CREAN (Cork, S.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can name a date for the inspection of the estate of Walter Neligan, Blarney, county Cork; whether he is aware that some of the tenants on this estate are paying interest to the Estates Commissioners while others are still paying rent to the landlord, having refused to sign purchase agreements unless the evicted tenant be reinstated; and whether the inspector will be empowered to take evidence on oath as to the circumstances which led to the present condition of things on the estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that purchase agreements in respect of a portion of this estate were lodged in May, 1906, and, as provided by the Act, interest has been collected in respect of such agreements pending the making of advances. The estate will be inspected in order of priority, but the Commissioners are unable to name any specific date. The inspector will be directed to inquire into the circumstances under which some of the tenants have refused to sign purchase agreements, and when his report has been received the Commissioners will consider whether there is any necessity for taking evidence in the case.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of Mrs. Ellin O'Shaughnessy.

MR. CREAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that in the case of Mrs. Ellin O'Shaughnessy, of Kilabraher, Dromina, near Charleville, negotiations were opened by the Estates Commissioners more than twelve months ago, with a view to her reinstatement on the farm from which her late husband had been evicted, and that the landlord, Captain Orpen, and the present occupier of the farm, Timothy Griffin, were both consenting to her reinstatement on condition of Griffin being provided with a farm in lieu of the one he occupies; whether the Estates Commissioners, through their inspector, Mr. P. V. Guiry, have repeatedly promised to get a farm for Griffin, but have not yet done so; and whether he will state what further steps, if any, the Estates Commissioners intend to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The question of procuring another holding for Timothy Griffin, in order to secure the reinstatement of the evicted tenant's representative in the farm which Griffin now occupies, is at present engaging the attention of the Estates Commissioners.

Annual Report of Irish Education.

Mr. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state when the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland will issue their annual Report for 1907, and if he can expedite the issue of the same so that it can be used for the debate on primary education to take place on the Civil Service Estimates.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The annual Report of the Commissioners of National Education deals with the school year, which ends on 30th June. It will not, therefore, be possible to issue the Report for the current year until some time after 30th June next.

Grant of Land to Grazier at Liss.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that a large grazier, holding over 400 acres of land, some in Shrule and some in Headfort, county Galway, for which he pays a yearly rent of over £500 a year, was given eighteen Irish acres of the untenanted lands of Liss by the Estates Commissioners; and will he explain why this was done, in view of the state of congestion which exists in the district.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners cannot identify the particular case in question. If the hon. Member will furnish the name of the grazier to whom he refers the Commissioners will be in a position to answer the Question.

Crime in County Clare.

Mr. MOORE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, how many persons were indicted at the Clare Assizes just concluded for offences against person and property; and in how many cases were there acquittals or disagreements of the jury.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The calendar at the Clare Assizes included nine cases of offences against person and property, in which eleven persons were indicted. Six persons were acquitted, two of the acquittals being by the direction of the Lord Chief Justice. Three persons were convicted, in one case the jury disagreed, and one case was adjourned to the next assizes.

Disorderly Demonstration at Dublin University.

Mr. MOORE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if the Government have conferred further powers on the governing body of the Royal University of Ireland to enable them to deal with a repetition of the disorderly and disloyal demonstrations of the last few years at the public conferring of degrees; and of what nature are these powers, and what penalties are attached.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The statutes of the Royal University have, at the request of the senate, been amended by the insertion of provisions empowering the senate to deal with graduates and undergraduates whom they may adjudge to have been guilty of serious misconduct at any of the functions of the University. In the case of undergraduates, the offender's name may be removed from the University register, or he may be refused further examination, or fined any sum not exceeding £10. The same penalties, with the exception of the first, apply in the case of graduates.

Intimidation in County Clare.

Mr. MOORE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the observations of the Lord Chief Justice in a case at the Clare assizes, when he said that the prosecutor had been terrorised into refusing to identify the person who had fired at him; and if he proposes to strengthen the ordinary Law to make such criminals amenable to justice.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have no information that the Lord Chief Justice made the remark attributed to him in the Question, but, according to a newspaper report to which my attention has been called, the learned judge expressed the opinion that a certain witness could have identified the offender in a case which was being tried before him. I do not see how the Law could be strengthened so as to compel a witness to give evidence of identification when he swears he is unable to give such evidence.

Rights of Congolese Natives.

MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he could give some assurance to this House that the treaty conditions, under which alone any annexation of the Congo State by Belgium would be acceptable to His Majesty's Government, would carry with them the right of the Congolese native to buy and sell freely of the produce of the soil.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the right of the Congolese native to buy and sell freely of the produce of the soil remain the same as those set forth in the circular to the Powers of the 8th August, 1903, which was published in Blue Book, Africa, No. 14 (1903).

Census of Production.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in respect to the circular, issued by his Department to employers, asking for particulars of wages paid to workmen which would permit a comparison between 1906 and 1886, he can also acquire information of the increased productive power of the workmen and of the greater pressure under which work is now performed, and also of the growth of profits and salaries amongst the commercial and professional classes during the past twenty years.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The points to which the hon. Member directs attention are of great interest and importance; but I do not think it would be desirable to complicate the inquiry now in progress as to money wages by attempting to deal with them in the same schedules. I hope that, in time, the results of the new Census of Production will furnish valuable information as to changes in output per person employed. The Income Tax Returns throw a good deal of light on the growth of income of the Income-Tax-paying sections of the population.

Fire at Ancoats—Emergency Exits.

MR. CLYNES: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has seen a report of the fire on Wednesday last as the mill of Messrs. M'Connell, Ancoats, Manchester, showing that to effect an escape windows were smashed by a large number of frightened women and girls, who for safety jumped into the street; and whether he can ascertain if proper and sufficient means of exit, in cases of fire, were provided at this mill on the fourth floor of which many girls were employed.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have received a report on the circumstances of this fire. The fire broke out on the fourth floor, and the girls employed on that and the two higher floors escaped without difficulty by an emergency exit and down a flight of steps into the yard. Some windows on the ground floor, in a different part of the building not affected by the fire, were broken by the crowd which had assembled in the street, and five or six girls employed in that part got out through them; this, I suppose, gave rise to the report referred to in the Question. The mill is provided with sufficient means of exit, to the satisfaction of the local authority and the Factory Department.

Emigrants from Ireland.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the number of emigrants from Ireland in the year 1906; how does this number compare with the number of emigrants from Ireland in previous years; what was the number in 1905; and what was the average annual number in the decennial periods 1875–1885, 1885–1895, and 1895–1905.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The number of emigrants from Ireland in the year 1906 was 35,344. The number for 1905 was 30,676. The average annual number in the decennial period 1876–1885 was 67,379; in 1886–1895, 59,977; and in 1896–1905, 37,746.

Regular Officers as Adjutants in Auxiliary Forces.

MAJOR RENTON (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): To ask the Secretary of State for War, what is the number of Regular officers serving as adjutants in the Yeomanry, Militia, and Volunteers respectively; and their cost to the public.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Fifty-six Regular officers are at present serving as adjutants in the Yeomanry, 143 in the Militia (excluding Channel Islands Militia), and 285 in the Volunteers. Their total cost is about £260,000 a year.

Disposal of Plate of Disbanded Regiments.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is to become of the old plate belonging to the various officers' messes of the Militia which is in value many thousand pounds, and will the terms of certain trust deeds, which provide for the division of the plate amongst the officers then in the regiment when it is disbanded, be acted upon or opposed; will pieces of plate presented by officers still alive be returned to them on their leaving the regiment; and what is to be done with the various sums at credit of the mess funds, band funds, and canteen funds of Militia regiments on their ceasing to exist.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The Government do not contemplate disbanding or the destruction of any Militia regiment under the provisions of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill. One of the principal objects in view in establishing county associations is to provide for the continuity of Militia traditions, and for the preservation of the distinctive character and belongings of each regiment in accordance with modern military requirements.

Civil Service Assistant Clerks.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state the number of assistant clerks (new class) now employed in the Civil Service, the number of clerks who, by length of service, are eligible for promotion to the Second Division, and the number who up to the present time have been promoted to that rank.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I have no information as to the number of asistant clerks (new class) who are qualified, so far as length of service is concerned, for promotion to the Second Division, nor of those now employed in the Civil Service except in so far as the latter figure may be ascertained from the Civil Service Estimates. The number of those who have been promoted up to date is, I understand, sixty-six.

Civil Contingencies Fund.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury why no estimate in respect of repayments to the Civil Contingencies Fund has been presented in Class 7 of the Estimates for 1907–8.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) In accordance with the regular practice this Estimate will be presented later in the Session, when the sum required to be repaid to the Fund in respect of advances made therefrom during the financial year 1906–7 has been definitely ascertained.

Outdoor Relief for Deserving Aged Poor.

MR. BENNETT: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will now re-issue the Local Government Board circular of August 1900, advising adequate outdoor relief for the deserving aged poor, with an addition explaining that the out-relief, where necessary, should be sufficient to include the cost of lodging and clothing as well as food.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I think that any question of re-issuing the circular should be deferred pending the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law.

Site and Cost of New Tea House in Hyde Park.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): To ask the First Commissioner of Works if he can state where it is proposed to erect the refreshment kiosk in Hyde Park, and at what cost; and whether the contract for catering will be undertaken by the Office of Works; and, if not, whether it will be thrown open to tender.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) I will put a map in the Tea Room showing the proposed site for the new tea house. The cost is set forth in the Estimates for next year. I have not yet decided how or by whom the catering will be done.

Working of the Irish Land Act.

Mr. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state, in respect of the working of the Land Act from 1st November, 1903, to 31st January, 1907, the number of applications for advances in cases within the zones; the number of these cases in which the sums applied for have been refused on account of excessive price or insufficiency of security; the number in which the sums applied for have been sanctioned without inspection of the holdings for value; the average number of years purchase of rent sanctioned, without the bonus, and with it respectively the number of applications for advances in cases not within the zones; the number of these in which the sums applied for have been refused on account of excessive price or insufficiency of security; the number in which prices have been sanctioned; and the average number of years purchase of rent sanctioned without the bonus and with it respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The hon. Member will find the information asked for, so far as it has been compiled, in Tables II. A, X., and XII., appended to the Report of the Estates Commissioners for the year ending 31st March, 1906. The current year's Report, which will be issued as soon as practicable after 31st instant, will contain further similar information.

Sale of Land in County Westmeath.

Mr. GINNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the names of owners of untenanted lands in Westmeath whom the Estates Commissioners have asked to sell land for distribution, distinguishing those who have consented to sell on terms which can be entertained, those who have asked prohibitive prices, and those who have refused or given no answer; have the Commissioners written, or will they write, to all the owners of such land in that county; how much untenanted land in that county do they expect to acquire and distribute this year; and what do the Government propose to do, and when, with reference to untenanted land required for the people and not offered for sale.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have already approached a number of owners of untenanted land in Westmeath, and intend to approach all such owners according as their names and addresses can be ascertained. Negotiations with certain owners are proceeding. Until the Commissioners have completed their inquiries as to untenanted land generally they think it would be premature and misleading to publish any such partial information as is asked for in the Question.

The O'Dwyer Estate.

Mr. GINNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will obtain and issue an authentic copy of the judgment delivered last month by Mr. Justice Ross in the matter of the O'Dwyer estate, since the learned Judge denies the accuracy of the published reports of his judgment.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have referred this Question to Mr. Justice Ross, who informs me that he has no recollection of having seen any report of his judgment in the case mentioned, and could not, therefore, have denied its accuracy. No written judgment was delivered in the matter, and no authentic copy of it can therefore be supplied.

Persons engaged in Rent Fixing, Valuating and Inspection of Irish Land.

Mr. GINNELL; To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can see his way to obtaining and circulating a list of those engaged in all the grades of rent fixing, valuing, and inspecting of land in Ireland, with the name of the original nominator of each.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The names of all persons who, on 1st January, 1907, were engaged in fixing judicial rents and in valuing and inspecting land under the Land Purchase Acts appear in the Returns ordered by this House last year (Nos. 231 and 237.) All these persons were nominated by the Lord Lieutenant for the time being, who makes the appointments. If, however, by the term original nominator the hon. Member means the person, if any, who may have recommended each gentleman for appointment, I have no information upon that head.

Pensions for ex-Soldiers—Cases of Kennedy and Stulch.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether his attention has been called to the case of a discharged soldier named Kennedy, now living at Longford, who caught cold and rheumatic pains during the South African War, and is now a permanent invalid, and will he direct that a pension be granted to him.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether, in the case of a man named Stulch, a discharged soldier living at Longford, any pension will be given him for his war services.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am afraid that I cannot trace the cases of the two men referred to in these Questions without fuller details. Will the hon Member be good enough to forward to the War Office the full names of the men, the names of their regiments, their regimental numbers, and the dates of their discharges, with any other information he may consider to bear on their cases. I will then cause inquiries to be made.

Volunteer Officers as Acting Adjutants.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): to ask the Secretary of State for War how many Volunteer units have Volunteers as acting adjutants; and, whether, in such cases the pay allotted to the adjutant is drawn by the acting adjutant.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There are twenty-four Volunteer officers acting as adjutants at the present time. These all draw the Army pay and allowances of their rank, with the exception of one officer who is an assistant adjutant, and who draws a consolidated allowance of £100 a year.

Supply of Seed Potatoes to Irish Congested Districts.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps have been taken to supply seed potatoes to Cromane, Keel, and the other congested districts along the Dingle Peninsula, where the potato crop failed last year; and, whether the people have several times applied for assistance in this direction.

(*Answered by Mr Birrell.*) Representations as to the necessity of aiding the people in these districts to obtain seed have been received. The people who require seed should take advantage of the money allocated by the Agricultural Department for seed through the local agricultural banks. Two of these banks operate along the Dingle Peninsula.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of James Mooney.

MR. DELANY (Queens County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Estates Commissioners have received a claim for reinstatement from James Mooney, who was evicted in 1878 and 1880 out of two farms respectively on the estate of Mr. Pigott, Capard, Rosenallis, Queen's County; and can he say what steps have been taken to reinstate Mooney, or in the alternative provide him with another holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received no application for reinstatement from James Mooney.

The Clifford Estate, County Kilkenny.

MR. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether negotiations for the sale of the Clifford estate, Thomastown, county Kilkenny, are taking place; whether he is aware that there are evicted tenants' tenements on this estate, and that now and for many months past a feeling of resentment has existed throughout the surrounding districts against the landlord in consequence of his treatment; and, whether, in view of the fact that on a recent visit of an inspector of the Estates Commissioners the landlord and his agent refused any accommodation or settlement with evicted tenants, he will recommend the Estates Commissioners not to confirm the sale until this matter is adjusted.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) No proceedings for the sale of this estate have been instituted before the Estates Commissioners, who have no knowledge of any negotiations between the landlord and tenants which may be in progress. The Commissioners have received but one application from an evicted tenant on the estate, and have decided that they can take no action in the case, seeing that the holding is not one to which the Land Law Acts apply, and that the evicted tenant is therefore ineligible for reinstatement under the Act. As no proceedings for sale are before the Commissioners the question of confirming the sale does not arise.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Foreign Trawlers off Plymouth.

MR. MILDMAY (Devonshire, Totnes): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the attention of their Lordships has been called to the action of a foreign trawler off Plymouth, whereby the drifter "Shamrock" was deprived of all her gear and her owner of his means of livelihood; whether in view of the fact that this is the last of a series of predatory acts by foreign trawlers, they will endeavour to give further and more efficient protection to the fishermen of Plymouth and South Devon; and whether, seeing that the owner of the "Shamrock," obliged, through previous losses due to foreign trawlers, to have recourse to borrowing money for the purpose, fitted out his boat and went to sea relying upon the protection promised by their Lordships of the Admiralty, they will consider the possibility of bestowing upon him a compassionate gratuity, so that he and his crew may be enabled to resume their calling, which they are powerless to do at present.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): My attention has been called to the damage to the "Shamrock," by a letter from the hon. Member and by statements in the local press; but I can find no evidence as to the nationality of the other vessel. Two vessels, instead of the one formerly employed, are now detailed to maintain a continuous patrol of these waters, and I regret that no further assistance can be afforded without diminishing the protection on other fishing grounds. As regards the last part of the Question, the Admiralty have no power to make any compassionate grant. I may add that the maintenance of vessels employed on fishery duties costs the Navy nearly £100,000 per annum, and the Admiralty are of opinion that the time has come for the whole question to be considered by a Committee including representatives of all the Departments concerned.

MR. MILDMAY asked what the nature of the Committee would be.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said the Committee would include representatives of the various Government Departments which were interested, including, of course, the Admiralty and the Board of Trade.

MR. MILDMAY: Will the Committee be immediately appointed, in view of the paralysis of the industry owing to the present state of affairs?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said he only went so far as to say that, in the opinion of the Admiralty, for which alone he spoke, a Committee ought to be appointed.

MR. MILDMAY: Then I will put a Question to the Prime Minister on the subject, later on. Cannot the Government make themselves answerable for the appointment of such a Committee?

Maintenance of Sailors' Families.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it has come to the knowledge of the Lords of the Admiralty that in many cases the wives and children of the sailors of the Royal Navy are reduced to destitution by being left totally unprovided for by the heads of the families, and that it is only with the greatest difficulty, by appeals to the Admiralty and letters to the captains of the ships, or by throwing themselves on the rates, that the necessary maintenance is obtained by the wives and children of men who go to sea and neglect to send remittances to those dependent on them at home; and whether some regulation could be made by which all ratings of the Navy should be compelled to declare whether they are married and have children, and, if so, should be obliged to make adequate allowance for the support of their wives and children by deductions from their pay for that purpose.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Admiralty have no reason to believe that any considerable portion of the men evade their responsibilities in this matter, but the suggestion in the last part of the hon. Member's Question will receive careful consideration.

Service Brigadier Generals.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Andover Division of Hampshire, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that while they remain in the service brigadier generals do major generals' work while only receiving colonels' pay, he will consider the possibility of allowing them to retain the honorary rank of general on retirement, instead of reducing them to the rank of colonel.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): A major general's work in peace time is the command of a division or an analogous appointment, while a brigadier general's work is the command of a brigade. Brigadier generals do not receive colonel's pay but rates specially provided for them. The question of honorary rank on retirement has been from time to time fully considered, and it has never so far been thought proper to grant the concession.

Preserved Meat Contracts.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the names of the tenderers for preserved meat, and the prices tendered, could be published, instead of, as now, withheld from publication, so that the information would be available for everyone.

MR. HALDANE: The information asked for by the Question has to be treated as confidential, and it would not be wise to make any exception in the case of preserved meat.

The Colonies and Army Meat Contracts.

MR. HUNT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that the limited time allowed by the authorities for sending in their tenders for preserved meat is a disadvantage to our Colonies, he could, instead of, as at the present time, allowing only about a week, see his way to make the time two months, so that the packers in New Zealand and Australia could have the conditions fully before them, instead of, as at present, having to send in their tenders merely on the strength of a necessarily meagre cablegram.

MR. HALDANE: As I explained to the House in reply to a similar Question put yesterday, sufficient time will, whenever possible, be allowed to enable the Colonial contractors to send in their tenders.

Military Manœuvres—Compensation to Landowners.

MR. MOND (Chester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in order to facilitate the field training of troops under varying conditions, he will introduce legislation to give the War Office necessary power to carry out manœuvres over any land they think adapted for the purpose, on the paying of a reasonable compensation for damage done to the owners or tenants thereof.

MR. HALDANE: Doubtless my hon. friend is aware of the considerable powers granted by the Manœuvres Act of 1897. I am glad, however, that he has raised the question, as it may be necessary to introduce hereafter a small Bill, for improving the facilities for the holding of manœuvres throughout the United Kingdom.

Army Rifle Ranges.

MR. MOND: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is proposed under the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, Clause 3, that, on the passing of this Bill, the cost for the provision of rifle ranges for the Territorial Army shall be paid by money voted by Parliament for Army Services.

MR. HALDANE: The provision of rifle ranges is one of the duties which it is proposed under the Bill to transfer to the associations. It is generally intended that the cost shall be met out of the monies provided for the expense of associations by Parliament. I am not in a position at present to give any further details as to the method of provision.

Volunteer Rifle Ranges.

MR. MOND: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the difficulties of Volunteer regiments in obtaining the land necessary for rifle ranges, he will, at an early date, introduce legislation enabling the War Office to acquire land for such purposes compulsorily at current market value for the same.

MR. HALDANE: The provisions of the Military Lands Acts are sufficient for the purpose of securing land for ranges for Volunteer corps, but compulsory purchase always in practice involves the payment of a price somewhat above the current market value of the land.

Period of Enlistment.

MAJOR RENTON (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how often the period of service for men enlisting in the artillery and cavalry and infantry of the line has been changed since the year 1880.

MR. HALDANE: I propose to hand the hon. Member a copy of the Answer, which is a long and complicated one.

Savings on the Indian Establishment.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the saving of £75,000 effected by returning men to the Indian establishment is counterbalanced by any additional charge upon the Indian Government.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E): I understand the hon. Member's Question to refer to the return to India of one of the Indian native infantry battalions hitherto stationed in Mauritius. This battalion, of course, becomes a charge on Indian revenues, but it is not in excess of the Indian establishment, as two Indian battalions, absent in China, are not at present chargeable to Indian revenues.

Indian Excise Administration Committee.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has received the views of the Government of India upon the Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Excise administration; whether, having regard to the importance of the subject, he will be able at an early date to make a statement as to the intentions of the Government; and whether further Papers will be laid upon the Table.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: I have ascertained from the Government of India that they are dealing with the recommendations of the Excise Committee, which cover a good deal of ground, in sections. Orders on two chapters have issued and will reach me in about a fortnight, and Orders on others will shortly issue. I shall be happy to present these as they reach me, if my hon. friend will move for them.

Zambesi Victoria Falls.

*MR. ESSEX (Gloucestershire, Cirencester): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the concession stated to be granted to the Victoria Falls Power Company to derive 250,000 e.h.p. from the Zambesi Victoria Falls has the approval of the Colonial Office; and whether powers to cancel such concessions have been reserved if the scheme is not in operation within say five years.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): The Secretary of State has signified his general approval in principle to the grant of proper facilities to the Victoria Falls Power Syndicate; but no detailed proposals for carrying out the concession have as yet been before him.

*Mr. ESSEX asked whether the Government reserved to itself the right to cancel any concession given if the scheme was not in operation within five years.

Mr. CHURCHILL repeated that no detailed proposals had been before the Colonial Office, and said he would like notice to be given of that Question.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Before a concession is given will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain that there is sufficient water in the dry season for a large concession to be granted without injuring the Falls?

Mr. CHURCHILL: No doubt that will have to be taken into consideration, but still public utility has also to be considered.

Mr. LUPTON: Do not forget the large amount of money spent by visitors in going to see this—one of the finest sights of the world.

New Hebrides Convention and the Islands of Kanaka.

*Mr. ESSEX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether Article XL., 3, of the New Hebrides Convention, Cd. 3160, will make possible the permanent residence in the Islands, of Kanaka labourers originally recruited under licence; if such is the case, for how long a time will the obligation to repatriate the labourer rest upon the recruiter?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Native labourers in the New Hebrides (who are, of course, natives of the group and not imported from outside) will not be compelled under the Convention to return to their homes at the expiration of their contracts if they do not desire to do so. No limit of time is fixed by the Convention to the liability of the employer, but the question of the period during which he will be bound to send back a labourer after the expiration of his contract is one that can be settled, if necessary, by local regulations of the High Commissioners, subject to the approval of His Majesty's Government and the French Government.

Boer War Expenditure.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, if he can now state the total cost incurred by this country in protecting Natal and Cape Colony against the Boer forces during the recent war.

Mr. CHURCHILL: No, Sir; it does not appear to be possible to show separately the expenditure to which my hon. friend refers.

Cape Duties on British Coal.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether the Customs Duty of 3s. 6d. per ton on British coal imported into Cape Colony is charged on coal raised in and imported from Natal; whether the Cape dock dues on coal and the coal rates on the Cape railways controlled by the Government are the same on British and Natal produce; and, if the answer to these Questions is in the negative, will he take the opportunity, afforded by the approaching visit of Colonial Premiers, for promoting freer trade within the Empire and closer commercial relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies, of respectfully suggesting that equal treatment be accorded the produce of this country and the Colonies when imported into any one of the component parts of the British Empire.

Mr. CHURCHILL: An import duty of 3s. per ton is levied on coal entering the South African Customs Union abroad. As both Natal and Cape Colony are members of that Union, the duty is not levied on coal entering one Colony from the other. From the materials available in this country, it is impossible to give a definite answer as to dock dues and railway rates. I am aware that it has been in the past the practice in South Africa to give preference to local products on the railways, but in the meetings which preceded the drawing up of the Convention of last year printed in Cd. 2977 the principle was enunciated that preference should be given by customs rates, and not railway rates. His Majesty's Government are in sympathy with the principle stated in the last part of the hon. Member's question, but it is inapplicable in cases where Colonies are members of one Customs Union.

Macedonian Gendarmerie.

Mr. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Ambassadors of the Powers have received a satisfactory reply from the Porte with reference to the demand for increased powers for the Macedonian gendarmerie put forward a year ago by General de Giorgis and recently renewed.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): The recent negotiations in regard to the gendarmerie have been carried on between General de Giorgis Pasha and the Sublime Porte. They have not yet been completed, but it is understood that they are proceeding satisfactorily. The question is a somewhat complicated one. The last papers dealing with the subject will be included in the general Blue-book on Macedonia which will shortly be laid before Parliament.

United States and Most-favoured-Nation Treatment.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in what respects the interpretation of most-favoured-nation treatment held by the United States Government differs from that held by His Majesty's Government; and whether he will lay Papers relative to any representations which have been made on the subject by His Majesty's Government or the Government of the United States.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The interpretation put by the United States Government on the most-favoured-nation clause is that concessions granted to one State by another conditionally and for a consideration cannot be claimed by a third State, although that State may be entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment. His Majesty's Government hold the contrary view, namely, that all favours, whether granted by law or by treaty, gratuitously or for a consideration, pass under the most-favoured-nation clause. No useful purpose would be served by laying Papers on the subject.

Congo State Annexation.

Mr. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he could give some assurance to this House that the treaty conditions, under which alone any annexation of the Congo State by Belgium would be acceptable to His Majesty's Government, would carry with them the right of the Congolese native to buy and sell freely of the produce of the soil.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the right of the Congolese native to buy and sell freely of the produce of the soil remain the same as those set forth in the circular to the Powers of 8th August, 1903, which was published in Blue-book Africa, No. 14 (1903).

Execution of a British Subject at Warsaw.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the British subject recently executed for robbery at Warsaw was represented by counsel at his trial.

Sir EDWARD GREY: Tingle was not assisted by counsel at his trial, as counsel are not allowed at field Courts-martial, the procedure of which is the same as that of regimental Courts-martial in time of war.

Lord BALCARRES: Has the Government any knowledge of what took place at the trial?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have no knowledge as to that, but I have knowledge that the man was caught in the act, and that there was no doubt about his guilt.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries in regard to the conduct of the trial?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I cannot make inquiries, because we are satisfied that the trial was exactly the same as would take place in the case of a Russian subject. There was no doubt as to the man's guilt, and martial law was applied to the district. We have no right to claim for British subjects more favourable treatment than is accorded to the subjects of the country in which they reside.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) asked whether there were others associated with this British subject in the committal of the crime, and whether the others were arrested.

Sir EDWARD GREY : I cannot say whether others were arrested for this particular crime. He was one of a number of people who robbed the tram-conductor, and he was caught, with the proceeds of the robbery in his possession, as he was running away.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs) : Was the British Ambassador referred to in the matter ?

Sir EDWARD GREY : No, Sir. The Consul-General took action himself, and asked that the sentence should be commuted, and he was informed that the crime, in the opinion of the authorities, was too grave to allow of commutation, and he said in his Report that exactly the same penalty would have been inflicted on any Russian subject who had been caught under the same circumstances.

Belgian Special Congo Commission.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give any information as to the possibility of an early Report by the Special Commission of Members of the Belgian Chamber appointed to consider the question of taking over the Congo Free State ; and whether he is in a position to make any representations to the Belgian Government with regard to the Question.

Sir EDWARD GREY : The Special Commission alluded to has not yet reached such a stage of its inquiry as to give any indication of the date when its labours may be expected to terminate. With regard to the last portion of the Question, His Majesty's Government have hitherto desired that Belgium should exercise her own rights. But this is a result to be brought about by Belgium acting independently on her own initiative, and is not likely to be promoted by the representations of a foreign Power.

Mr. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) asked if the right hon. Gentleman would inquire when they might expect to have the Report, considering the long time which had elapsed since he made a statement on the subject.

Sir EDWARD GREY replied that he had already given instructions to be kept informed from time to time of the progress that was being made.

Depreciation of Securities.

Mr. GEORGE FABER (York) : I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the case of the Post Office Savings Banks and the Trustee Savings Banks, respectively, the National Debt Commissioners show in their annual published accounts the amount of the depreciation in the value of the securities in which the deposits have been invested ; and whether the depreciation fund, directed by statute to be created out of surplus interest, if any, has been sufficient to meet the depreciation ; and, if not, what is the present amount of the total depreciation in each case ; whether, in each of the above cases, the interest arising out of the securities in which the deposits have been invested has been sufficient to meet the rate of interest payable under statute to depositors ; and, if not, what is the amount of the total deficit in each case, and out of what moneys has it from time to time been met ?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) : The annual statements of the Savings Banks Funds are prepared in the form prescribed in the Savings Banks Act, 1904. They show the liabilities of the funds and the nature and amount of the securities held, but they do not include a valuation of the securities at current market price. Such valuations were condemned by the Select Committee of 1902 as misleading. There is no statutory depreciation fund. The hon. Member is presumably referring to the provisions of an Act of 1877, which directed that, out of any surplus income arising on the Savings Banks Funds, such portion as the Treasury considered necessary might be retained in those funds to provide against depreciation of the securities. To publish now a statement of the depreciation of the securities would be contrary to the intention of the Act of 1904. When the interest earned is insufficient to meet the charges on the funds, the deficiency is made good by Vote of Parliament. An Estimate has just been presented to the House of the sums required to meet the deficiencies incurred in 1906.

MR. GEORGE FABER: Is it not the fact that the depreciation of these securities amounts to an immense sum?

MR. ASQUITH: The hon. Member can raise the matter on the Estimates, for, as I have already said, there is power to make good the deficiencies of the year out of money provided by Parliament.

MR. GEORGE FABER: But the total deficiency—not the deficiency of the year?

MR. ASQUITH: Ah! That is another matter.

Berks and Bucks Stag Hunt.

MR. MARNHAM (Surrey, Chertsey): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a stag hunt in which members of the Berks and Bucks Hunt took part on Thursday 28th ultimo, when a stag, bleeding from cuts, was chased into the village of Windlesham, Surrey, where it sank down from exhaustion and was ultimately strangled by the villagers who attempted to drag it by rope to a stable near by; and whether he will consider the matter of introducing such legislation as will put a stop to the hunting of carted animals.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I have made inquiry, and am informed that the animal, when recaptured, was accidentally strangled in its struggles to escape. It was bleeding only from a slight scratch on one hind leg. I think that the hunting of carted stags is open to objection, but to prohibit it would require legislation which I am not prepared to undertake.

*MR. REES: Is it not the case that the strangling of the stag was due to the ignorant conduct of the villagers, and not to the huntsman?

MR. GLADSTONE: I believe that is so.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) asked when the Government would give facilities for the consideration of the Spurious Sports Bill.

MR. GLADSTONE: That is a question for the Prime Minister.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the country of the Berks and Bucks Hunt six stags have been killed since November 26th last?

MR. GLADSTONE: I am not aware of that.

Hackney Carriage Table of Distances.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider the propriety of issuing a new table of distances for hackney carriages in lieu of the obsolete publication of 15th May, 1896, a copy of which, exhibited at the Palace of Westminster, omits to give the distance to more than one railway terminus in London.

MR. GLADSTONE: A revised Table will be prepared for the place which the hon. Member mentions.

Alleged Electoral Intimidation at Rye.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the police authorities in the Rye Division of Sussex have forwarded to him any Report as to intimidation in that constituency at the last general election; if not, whether such information can be obtained from any other source; and whether he has received any assurances from the Nonconformist electors in the Rye Division that none of them was boycotted or otherwise injured in business as a result of their supporting the Liberal candidate.

MR. GLADSTONE: The Chief constable of East Sussex reports in reply to my inquiry that no complaint of intimidation in the Rye division has been received by the police. No communication on the subject has reached me from the Nonconformist electors.

Ancoats Mill Fire.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N. E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has seen a report of the fire on Wednesday last at the mill of Messrs. M'Connell, Ancoats, Manchester, showing that to effect an escape windows were smashed by a large number of frightened women and girls, who, for safety, jumped into the street; and whether he can ascertain if proper and sufficient means of exit, in case of fire, were provided at this mill, on the fourth floor of which many girls were employed.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have received a report on the circumstances of this fire. The fire broke out on the fourth floor and the girls employed on that and the two higher floors escaped without difficulty by an emergency exit and down a flight of steps into the yard. Some windows on the ground floor in a different part of the building not affected by the fire were broken by the crowd which had assembled in the street, and five or six girls employed in that part got out through them; this I suppose gave rise to the report referred to in the Question. The mill is provided with sufficient means of exit, to the satisfaction of the local authority and the factory department.

Match Factories—Special Rules.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the special rules for match factories deal with cases in which a worker is in such a state of health as to incur danger from his work; if so, why, in the recent fatal case, a man, stated to have long been known to have the seeds of necrosis in his system, was exposed to phosphorus poisoning, and at what point the dentist had first referred the case to the certifying surgeon; and whether at any time this man was reported by His Majesty's inspector of factories as having the seeds of necrosis in his system.

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir. The rules provide for periodical examination by the dentist, whose duty it is to suspend the worker whenever he finds danger of necrosis by reason of bad teeth or exposure of the jaw, and moreover to report to the certifying surgeon, if there be inflammation or necrosis of the jaw, or such a state of health as to involve danger of necrosis. As regards the second part of the Question, I perhaps conveyed a wrong impression in the reply I gave to the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, on on the 26th February.† No suspicion of necrosis arose in the case referred to until after the extraction of a tooth on the 19th December last, when the necrosis was found, and the case was at once referred by the dentist to the certifying surgeon. It was the discovery then made, when taken in connection with the history of the fracture of the man's leg, which led to the conclusion that phosphorus had begun to affect his system long before.

Payment of Telegraph Messengers.

*MR. ESSEX: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the docket (or piece-work) system of payment to telegraph messengers still obtains at any telegraph office; and, if so, in how many.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The system of paying telegraph messengers a docket or piece-work rate of wages with a fixed minimum obtains at about 415 of the larger telegraph offices of the United Kingdom. As a rule it is only at the small offices that a fixed rate of wages is paid.

Sunderland Postmen's Christmas Overtime.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that payment for overtime worked by the postmen of Sunderland during the snowstorm in December has not yet been made; and, if so, will he see to the payment of the same as early as possible, especially in view of the fact that the payment is now over two months overdue.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The payment is now being made.

Fence Houses Mail Cart Driver's Hours of Duty.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware of the hours devoted to duty daily by the rural mail-car driver of Fence Houses, county Durham, namely, that he has to be up at 4.45 a.m. each morning and be at the call of the post office till 8 p.m., making a daily record of fifteen and a quarter hours, which includes two and three-quarter hours for meals; and, if so, if he will favourably consider the case of such men, with a view to an improvement in their conditions of labour.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxix., 1414.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If the Question refers, as it apparently does, to the rural postman who drives a cart between Fence Houses and Cox Green the hours of duty given are not correct. The man in question comes on duty for the first time at 6.15 a.m. and goes off duty for the day at 6.20 p.m., and he has intervals of about five hours between those times, so that he has seven hours of actual duty only.

MR. SUMMERBELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the man has to go to the stable and harness his horse before he starts work?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have communicated all the information I have. If the hon. Member has further information I will inquire into it.

New Zealand Mails.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if the mail to New Zealand which should have been despatched on Saturday 9th March, *via* San Francisco, was cancelled, and a mail *via* the Suez Canal substituted in its place; and, if so, what is the cause of this irregularity in the mail service and how long is it likely to continue.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No mail for New Zealand *via* San Francisco was despatched on the 9th instant because of the temporary withdrawal for repairs of the American Contract Packet appointed to leave San Francisco for Auckland on the 21st instant. Correspondence for New Zealand was sent by way of Suez on the 8th instant. I am not aware how soon the repairs to the packet will be completed.

Cleadon Rural Postman's Hours of Duty.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that the hours of the rural postman between Sunderland and Cleadon are from 4.45 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., out of which he has to spend three hours and forty minutes wherever he can at Cleadon, no accommodation being provided for him, and that when he applied for the provision of a shelter, he was asked by the postmaster if he could not make the stable serve him, and further, that he has to pay stable rent out of his own pocket; and, if so, will he undertake to provide a shelter for the man and make an allowance for stable rent.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have called for a Report on this subject and will send the hon. Member an Answer in due course.

Cheltenham Teachers' Training College.

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to the case of Miss James, a pupil-teacher studying at the Thoresby High School, Leeds, who applied for admission to the Teachers' Training College, Cheltenham, a college subsidised from public funds, and who was refused admission on the ground of social *status*; and, if so, will he give instructions that this college is no longer subsidised from public funds.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): I am aware of the incident referred to, but, inasmuch as the action of the Training College authorities was not contrary to the existing regulations, I am not in a position to refuse the grant. I am considering the conditions governing the admission of students to training colleges in connection with the forthcoming regulations, and will bear in mind the case referred to by the hon. Member.

MR. O'GRADY: Is it a fact that the college is subsidised by public funds, and that want of social *status* is a bar to admission?

*MR. McKENNA: If the hon. Gentleman is referring to the past, that is so.

MR. O'GRADY: Is it not a fact that the college is still subsidised from public funds and that that bar still exists?

*Mr. McKenna : That is so at this moment.

New School Grant.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education upon what principle it is proposed to distribute the grant of £100,000 specially provided for new schools.

Mr. McKENNA : I have nothing to add to the reply which I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for the Oswestry Division of Shropshire.†

Welsh Education Department Accounts.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if the new Welsh Department will be subject to the supervision of the Accountant-General of the Board or will have its own Accountant-General.

Mr. McKENNA : The expenditure of the Welsh Department will continue to be accounted for by the Accountant-General of the Board.

Holyrood Chapel.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the ruins of Holyrood Chapel have been and are now being protected; and whether he has taken any professional advice on the matter.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale): Yes, Sir, and I am glad to say that Professor Lethaby, in his recent report on the ruins of Holyrood, added these words as a postscript:—"I examined the tops of the walls and the broken pillars and found that they were carefully kept, having been stopped up with cement in a thorough manner. The roof over the south aisle is also very sound and well kept."

Mr. MORTON : Is it intended to keep the building in repair?

Mr. HARCOURT : Certainly. The principal architect in Scotland is constantly examining the ruins with that object.

Andoversford—Cheltenham Train Service.

*Mr. ESSEX : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he proposes to take any steps to secure a better correspondence of trains between the Great Western Railway and Midland and South-Western Junction Railway at Andoversford - Cheltenham.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Kearley, Devonport): The Board of Trade have communicated with both the Railway Companies concerned in this matter, and I am now sending my hon. friend copies of their replies.

Board of Trade and Inefficient Railway Services.

Mr. ESSEX : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he will consider the advisability of taking steps, by legislation or otherwise, to secure that a railway shall not withdraw a train or trains from its service, which leaves its district without railway communication for twelve consecutive hours, without the sanction of the Board of Trade.

Mr. KEARLEY : If my hon. friend will send particulars of any such cases that he may have in mind, the Board of Trade will be happy to investigate the complaint.

Argentine Hams.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that, in consequence of the inferior quality of some of the hams which are sent to Argentina from England, the Ministry of Agriculture in Argentina has decided not to permit their introduction after 15th April unless accompanied by a certificate of good quality issued by the British sanitary authorities and endorsed by the Argentine Consulates in England; can he say whether this is intended to apply in the case of Irish hams; and, if so, what steps he intends to take to safeguard the good name of a valuable Irish product, especially in view of the efforts at present being made to open up direct trade between Ireland and Argentina.

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxx., 1262.

The following Questions on the same subject also appeared on the Paper:—

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what quantity of British hams and bacon were exported to Argentina during 1906.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Argentine Ministry of Agriculture have decided to exclude British hams and bacon from Argentina after 15th April, 1907, unless such goods are accompanied by certificates issued by the British sanitary authorities and endorsed by the Argentine Consulates in England; and what action His Majesty's Government propose to take in the matter.

MR. KEARLEY: I will answer these Questions together. The Argentine Ministry issued a decree in October last imposing certain conditions upon the imports of hams, bacon, and other animal products, in the interests of public health. I understand that the regulations apply to products of any origin, native or foreign. The Board of Trade are fully alive to the matter and the Foreign Office is in communication with the Argentine Government. The quantity of British hams and bacon exported from this country to the Argentine during 1906 was 8166 cwts, valued at £36,520.

British Trade with Servia.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what were the amounts of our trade with Servia in 1904, 1905, and 1906; and what is the annual value of our exports upon which tariff concessions have been granted in the treaty just concluded between Servia and this country.

MR. KEARLEY: There were no direct imports from Servia into the United Kingdom in the years mentioned. The recorded exports from the United Kingdom to Servia amounted in value to £59,637 in 1904; to £52,971 in 1905; and to £61,724 in 1906; but there is reason to believe that these figures understate the facts, as some exports ultimately intended for Servia are declared as sent to foreign firms in Austria and certain neighbouring countries. The great bulk of the export trade from the United Kingdom to Servia is covered by the tariff concessions under the treaty recently concluded, a full list of which was published in the Board of Trade Journal last week.

Poor-Law Defects.

*MR. ESSEX: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has taken any steps to deal with the injustices of the Poor-Law system, as promised by him on 4th August, 1906.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): My hon. friend mentioned two matters in the debate on 4th August last, one, the separation of aged couples in workhouses, the other, the compulsory contribution by children to the maintenance of their parents in the workhouse. As regards the former point, I may observe that, under the present law, a married couple above sixty years of age in a workhouse are entitled to live together, and that, if either of them is above that age, they may be allowed to live together. As regards the other point, the subject of the contributions to the maintenance of paupers by their relatives is, I believe, engaging the attention of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. I may add that my hon. friend is mistaken in thinking my right hon. friend the President made any promise on the occasion to which he refers. My right hon. friend did not take part in the debate.

*MR. ESSEX: The promise was made in the "Aye" lobby.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): Is it intended to postpone dealing with this question until the Report of the Poor-Law Commission has been received?

DR. MACNAMARA: That Question had better be addressed to my right hon. friend.

London County Council Indoor Pauper Grant.

MR. BROOKE (Tower Hamlets, Bow and Bromley): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government

Board whether, in consideration of the effect of the present basis for the distribution of the London County Council grant of 4d. a day per head for every indoor pauper upon those London unions where pauperism has increased since 1888, he will now, or in the near future, introduce legislation proposing that the grant be redistributed upon the basis of the pauperism existing in those unions during the five years ending March, 1906.

DR. MACNAMARA: The Royal Commission on Local Taxation recommended the abolition of this Grant, and the substitution of another for it. The whole subject of the Grant must be considered when the Government deal with the question of Local Taxation, and in the meantime my right hon. friend could not promise to propose legislation to the effect suggested.

Chicago Meat Scandals.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what action, if any, he proposes to take on Consul Finn's Report on the Chicago meat scandals.

MR. MACNAMARA: My right hon. friend has introduced a Bill which, if it passes into law, will enable the Local Government Board to make regulations with regard to the importation, preparation, storage, and distribution of foods. In adopting this course he has taken into consideration not only this Report, but also information collected from various sources regarding the wholesomeness of the imported meat which is especially in question.

SIR GILBERT PARKER asked if any steps were being taken to make inquiries respecting the manufacture and preparation of tinned meat in the Colonies.

DR. MACNAMARA asked for notice of the Question.

SIR WILLIAM BULL: Is it not proposed to publish the Report?

DR. MACNAMARA: That is a Question for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

SIR WILLIAM BULL: That right hon. Gentleman referred me to the President of the Local Government Board.

DR. MACNAMARA: I think not. I have looked up all the Questions and do not find it to be so.

Expenditure on Bill Promotion in Parliament.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the sums which British local authorities have found it necessary to expend in promoting Bills in Parliament during each of the last five years for which figures are available.

DR. MACNAMARA: The latest information on this subject as regards England and Wales, with which alone I am concerned, will be found in a Parliamentary Return made in 1900, relative to the expenditure of the principal local authorities in respect of Private Bill Legislation during a series of seven years. According to that Return the total amount expended in promoting Private Bills during the period dealt with by it was £644,473. I will send my hon. friend a copy of the return.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: Can my hon. friend give any promise that the Local Government Board will introduce legislation to relieve local authorities of the necessity of making this wasteful expenditure?

DR. MACNAMARA: I should like notice of that Question.

Alderney Abattoirs.

*MR. ESSEX: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he proposes to make a statement upon the proposed Alderney abattoirs.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): The position in regard to this matter remains what it was when a reply was made to the Question put by my hon. friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland on the 29th November last.†

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxvi., 303.

We think that the establishment of a wharf at Alderney for the landing and slaughtering of animals which are not allowed to be brought to Great Britain on account of the danger of the introduction of disease is open to grave objection, and we are not prepared in any way to countenance it. If there is any particular point as to which my hon. friend would desire to receive information perhaps he would kindly communicate with me on the subject.

Political Pensions Bill.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for the Central Division of Sheffield whether he intends to proceed with the Bill for the abolition of Political Pensions introduced by him; and what steps, if any, has he taken, or does he intend to take, to expedite the passage of this Bill through the House of Commons.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): The Bill in question passed its Second Reading on Friday last, *nemine contradicente*, in the absence of the hon. Member. The further stages depend on the assistance given by the Prime Minister and the Government.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I thank the hon. and gallant Member for his very reassuring answer. Will he ask his friends in Opposition to facilitate the passing of the Bill?

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: I have said its future depends on the attitude of the Leader of the House.

Licensed Premises on Charity Commission Estates.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the right hon. Member for Sheffield (Hallam Division) as representing the Church Estates Commission, whether he will say in how many cases of licensed premises on the estates of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the said Commissioners have made it a condition of their assent that the said premises shall be closed on Sundays; and whether he is in a position to assure the House that in future such a condition shall always be imposed.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): In one case certainly within recent years, and there may be others, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have made it a condition in the grant of a lease of licensed premises that there should be no trade on Sundays. On the grant of fresh leases the propriety of annexing such a condition, having regard to all the circumstances of each case, will be among the considerations which the Commissioners will take into account.

Riparian Rights in Scotland.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in view of the fact that immemorial rights of trout fishing in the Tweed and other rivers of Scotland are being taken away from the public by the action of the riparian proprietors, he will introduce legislation to protect the rights which have hitherto been enjoyed.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg at the same time to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that the Tweed proprietors have stated that their action in restricting fishing is due to a desire to remedy the disastrous effects of unfair fishing by a few individuals, and to organise and regulate the pursuit of the sport in future, and that they will encourage the formation of local associations to promote these ends, and to prevent the enjoyment of many being ruined by the unsportsmanlike actions of a few; and whether, under these circumstances, he propose to take any action with a view to assist in the preservation of the fishing.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): The action of the riparian owners in excluding the public from fishing in the Tweed and various tributaries has been on an extensive scale, and has been noted by the Government. That action appears to be concerted, and has resulted in the shutting out of great districts of the border country from angling purposes. The Question of my hon. friend appears to state with substantial accuracy the reasons assigned by the proprietors for their restriction of the privileges hitherto enjoyed by the general public, but I am informed that so far as the upper proprietors are concerned they have not signified their intention to encourage the formation of local angling associations.

The question of legislation on this subject is not within my department, but I am authorised to state that the whole matter, the importance of which is recognised, is receiving the careful attention of the Government.

Scottish Unemployed Grant.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can say how much of the £200,000 grant for the unemployed has been given to Scotland, and in what districts it has been expended.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): A sum of £10,000 was placed at the disposal of the Local Government Board for Scotland. So far, grants have been made only to the distress committees of Glasgow and Aberdeen, but the main distribution will follow on Returns to be received by the Board presently.

MR. MORTON: Has Scotland in this case got the whole of her share of the equivalent grant?

MR. SINCLAIR: There is no ground for saying that Scotland has not had or will not have her full share.

MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that Scotland gets her full share, which should be £22,000, not £10,000?

[No Answer was returned.]

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

MR. A. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will introduce the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill before the Easter recess.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Prime Minister is not yet able to name a day.

Perth Prison—Warder's Duties.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received any representations from the warders of Perth Prison, as to their hours of duty; and, if so, whether he will take steps to give effect to such representations.

MR. SINCLAIR: A petition was received in 1906 and is under consideration.

Irish Criminal Law Procedure.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland what is the reason for the dissimilarity between the practice in criminal prosecutions in England and Ireland, whereby in Ireland all counsel representing the Attorney-General in criminal cases claimed to be entitled to a general right of reply, and are allowed to exercise such general right of reply even in cases where no evidence on behalf of the accused has been produced; whereas in England, by a resolution of the English Judiciary in December, 1884, in criminal cases in which the prosecution is conducted on behalf of the Crown, where no evidence is offered for the accused, the right of reply is restricted to the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General alone when prosecuting on behalf of the Crown in person, and is rarely exercised by these officials, and never without protest by prisoner's counsel; and whether he has brought this matter under the notice of the Judges of the Irish King's Bench Division, with a view to ascertaining whether they would, in the interests of justice, adopt the Resolution passed by the English Judiciary in 1884, and so assimilate the practice in the two countries.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange): I can give no reason for the dissimilarity between the practice in criminal prosecutions in England and Ireland referred to in the Question, and I may perhaps say for myself that I very much regret that such dissimilarity should exist. In reply to the latter part of the Question, I have to inform my hon. friend that in compliance with a promise I made to him in this House on the 13th November last,† I brought the matter under the notice of the Judges with a view to ascertaining whether they would consider it wise, in the interests of justice, to adopt the Resolution passed by the English Judiciary in 1884. The matter was considered at a meeting of the Judges of the King's Bench Division on 11th of February last, when the following Resolution was unanimously passed by them: "That having regard to the long course of unquestioned practice in Ireland of allowing a reply by the counsel representing the Attorney-General, although no witnesses are called for the defence, we do not think that this practice ought to be altered merely by a Resolution of the Judges, and that if it is to be altered, such alteration must be effected either by judicial decision or legislation."

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxiv., 1301.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is it not the case that prosecuting counsel represent the right hon. Gentleman himself, and will he consider the propriety of instructing Gentlemen who represent him not to insist on this right of reply when no evidence is called for the defence?

MR. CHERRY: They do represent me, but I should not feel justified in directing them to do what Judges hold should be done only by legislation.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Did not the right hon. Gentleman himself in the case for criminal libel against Mr. McHugh strongly protest against the practice?

MR. CHERRY: That was a private prosecution in which I appeared for the defence. I did object to the action of the counsel for a private prosecutor exercising the right.

Maxwell Estate, Donegal.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland can he state what is the cause of the delay of the Estates Commissioners in issuing vesting orders to the tenants who purchased their holdings on the Maxwell estate, parish of Clonleigh, South Gortin, county Donegal, whilst the tenants who purchased another portion of the same estate, situated in county Tyrone, at the same time, received their vesting orders six months ago; and can he say when these vesting orders will be issued.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The advances to the tenants in this case were made only within the last fortnight, and the necessary documents were then sent to the Registrar of Titles so that the ownership might be registered. It is expected that the land certificates of ownership will be issued at an early date.

Roberts Estate, County Longford.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in connection with the sale to the Estates Commissioners of the Roberts estate, at Newtowncashel, county Longford, the vendors' solicitor has recently made a letting of a farm, called the Lough farm, to the estate bailiff, Mulvihill, with the object of preventing its sub-division amongst the uneconomic holdings on this property; and, if so, will he now direct the Commissioners to insist upon the acquirement of this farm as untenanted land before concluding the sale.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, N.): Is it in order to impute motives, as is done in this Question, which says the object of the letting was to prevent a sub-division of the land among the uneconomic holdings?

*MR. SPEAKER: The statement is made on the responsibility of the hon. Member, and, if inaccurate, it can be corrected in the reply.

MR. BIRRELL: As I informed the hon. Member on Wednesday last no proceedings for the sale of this estate have been instituted before the Estates Commissioners, and the Commissioners therefore have no knowledge of the fact alleged in the Question.

Blacklion Boycotting Case.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the length of time during which Mr. Thomas E. Taylor, of Blacklion, county Cavan, has been boycotted, and the reason why the practice of exclusive dealing is in operation against him; whether Mr. Crozier, justice of the peace for county Cavan, and Mr. Bracken, petty sessions clerk and postmaster at Blacklion, have refused to supply Mr. Taylor with goods; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by the police authorities that Mr. Taylor was boycotted for about six weeks up to the middle of last month, when the boycotting ceased. The matter appears to have arisen out of an agrarian dispute. Messrs. Crozier and Bracken failed to supply Mr. Taylor with goods on one or two occasions, each stating that he had not the required article. I do not see that any action is called for.

MR. COURTHOPE: Was not the boycotting renewed on the fourth of this month?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no information of that. I will inquire.

Golding Estate, County Galway.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that dissatisfaction prevails in Cloonlea, Headfort, county Galway, regarding the apportionment of the untenanted lands of Liss, on the Golding estate; will he state how many people were imported on to the lands; how far were they living away from the lands; what were their circumstances; and will he give a list containing the names and the size of the small holdings lying immediately alongside the untenanted land left unprovided for.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many evicted tenants were given holdings on the Liss untenanted lands on the Golding estate, Headfort, county Galway; what were their qualifications; and where did they reside for twenty years back.

I beg further to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that a farmer was migrated a distance of ten miles into the untenanted lands of Liss, Golding estate, while the lands available were entirely insufficient for the requirements of local people; whether he is aware that the said farmer was brought from a property not yet offered for sale; whether 1,500 acres of land has recently been divided in the parish in which this man resided; and whether he will instruct the Commissioners in future to provide for local people before importing them from a distance.

MR. BIRRELL: I will answer the hon. Member's three Questions on this subject together. The Estates Commissioners are not aware that local dissatisfaction prevails regarding their apportionment of the untenanted land on the estate mentioned. Three evicted tenants from within two or three miles of the estate were provided with holdings, and one tenant was migrated to the estate from about five miles away. This latter tenant came from a very congested district, and the holding vacated by him has been used to relieve congestion. It is the practice of the Commissioners to consider the claims of local people before giving land to persons from a distance, and in the present instance the Commissioners understand that all persons in the immediate neighbourhood of the Golding estate who were qualified to receive land have been duly provided for.

Gaynor Estate, County Roscommon.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received from the tenants of the Gaynor estate, situate in the county Roscommon, a memorial setting forth that the landlord is willing to sell the estate, including 400 acres of untenanted land, and the necessity for the enlargement of holdings upon the estate; if so, whether this memorial has received the consideration of the Commissioners; and whether immediate steps will be taken to meet the wishes of the landlord who is willing to sell and the tenants who are prepared to purchase.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received the memorial referred to, and if the owner should initiate proceedings before them, they are prepared to have the property inspected with a view to making an offer of purchase.

Goff Estate, County Roscommon.

MR. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, on the 3rd July last, an originating request was lodged on behalf of the landlord of the Goff estate, situate at Roxborough, county Roscommon, for the sale of the estate under Section 6 of the Land Act of 1903; whether he is aware that, since that date, frequent applications have been made on behalf of the landlord and tenants for the inspection of this estate and ignored; and whether, in view of the fact that there is a large quantity of untenanted land included in this estate, immediate steps will be taken to secure its acquisition for distribution.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that the fact is as stated in the first part of the Question. On the 7th instant the Commissioners made an order for the preliminary inspection, and this will be carried out as soon as possible, having regard to the prior claims of other estates to be dealt with.

Lauder Estate, King's County.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have taken over the grass farm lately in the possession of a man named Cruise on the Lauder estate, in Clonfairlough, near Ferbane, King's County, it being held under the eleven months system; and, as Cruise has left the neighbourhood, what is the cause of the delay in dividing this land, as it is in the middle of a congested district.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have made an offer to the Land Judge for the purchase of this estate, including land occupied by Mr. Cruise, with which the Commissioners propose to enlarge small holdings. Should the offer be accepted, the Commissioners will prepare a scheme for the re-arrangement and enlargement of the holdings.

Major Urquhart's King's County Estate.

MR. REDDY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the farm of the late Major Urquhart, Cloghan, King's County, consisting of over 700 acres, has been offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners; and, if so, will he see that immediate steps are taken to acquire the same, in view of the fact that there are a large number of uneconomic holdings in the locality requiring enlargement.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are in communication with the owner's solicitors with a view to the purchase of the property in question.

Irish Language in Irish Schools.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, seeing the dissatisfaction which exists in Ireland with regard to the payment of fees for the teaching of Irish in national schools, steps will be immediately taken by the Irish Government to secure that proper facilities and remuneration be given for the teaching of the national language in the primary schools of our country.

MR. BIRRELL: I wish to make the position of the Irish Government quite clear on the subject of fees for teaching Irish. Since July, 1906, fees for Irish as an extra subject in national schools have been abolished. Irish is now an optional subject which can, with the consent of the managers, be taught in every national school, either outside or during school hours. Extern teachers may be employed if the teachers of the school are not competent to teach the subject. According to the new scale of fees which came into force on 1st July, 1906, 1s. per scholar is paid for Irish in the lower standards, and 2s. 6d. in the higher standards. The Commissioners of National Education are of opinion that Irish can be best taught by the ordinary teachers of a school; and in order to provide a sufficient number of competent teachers, they award thirty prizes yearly in the training colleges for the encouragement of Irish. In these colleges, Irish is an optional subject, so far as the National Board is concerned, but it is open to the managers of the colleges to make it compulsory, if they so desire. The supply of national school teachers competent to teach Irish is at present very defective, so much so that the Commissioners are unable, in many instances, to enforce the new rule requiring teachers appointed to schools in Irish-speaking districts to have a knowledge of Irish. This seems to point to the necessity of the managers of training colleges making the learning of Irish compulsory in those institutions. The Commissioners of National Education, being of the opinion that the scale of fees which I have just mentioned was insufficient for the remuneration of extern teachers, made proposals for an increase in the scale in connection with the Estimates for 1906–7, and these proposals were supported by the Irish Government. The Treasury, however, felt unable to sanction these proposals, as my hon. friend the Secretary to that Department has already informed the hon. Member.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): Does the right hon. Gentleman's answer mean that the £5,000 a year promised by his predecessor for the teaching of Irish is not to be increased ?

MR. BIRRELL: I have said that the Treasury have not acceded to the view of the National Commissioners for an increase of the grant.

Banbridge Technical School.

MR. LIDDELL (Down, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the fact that Banbridge technical school with 290 pupils receives from the Department £250 per annum, while Athlone with 240 pupils and Portadown with 285 receive £400 and £500 respectively from the Department; and if he will take steps to remedy this inequality.

MR. BIRRELL: The sums allocated to the various urban districts are based, not upon the number of pupils in attendance, but upon a scheme in which the chief factor is population. The whole of the Department's endowment for technical education has been allocated, and it would not be possible to increase the grant for one centre without reducing the grants for other centres. The Department do not consider it desirable to allocate funds in proportion to the pupils, inasmuch as that there are wide differences in the character and cost of the instruction in different districts.

Banbridge Post Office.

MR. LIDDELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he has received a resolution from the Banbridge Urban Council requesting new or additional accommodation for the public to be provided for the postal necessities of the town; and what action he proposes to take in the matter.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have received a communication on this subject from the Urban District Council. The question of improving the present post office accommodation at Banbridge is receiving careful consideration, and the council's views on the subject will not be overlooked.

Education Bill.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone): I beg to ask the Prime Minister on what date he proposes to take the Second Reading of the Education (Special Religious Instruction) Bill.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): I cannot at present say.

LORD R. CECIL: May we take it that it will not be next week ?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I can say nothing definite about it.

Opening of Parliament.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the lack of accommodation in another place for Members of this House and to the great extension made in recent years in the principles of popular government, he will endeavour to arrange that upon future occasions of the opening of Parliament His Majesty's most gracious Speech shall be read in this House, instead of, as at present, in that other place.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, Sir, I do not feel disposed to propose an alteration in the present arrangement.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Could not a neutral place be used for the ceremony—say Westminster Hall ?

[No Answer was returned.]

Hamburg Dock Strike.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North-east Manchester, I beg to ask the Prime Minister, in view of the support given last session to the Bill which proposed to prevent British employers importing foreign workmen to fill men's places during a dispute, whether he can take any action to prevent the exportation of the 2,000 men from Liverpool and other places who are being shipped to Hamburg to labour for foreign employers in place of the men who are stopped through a dispute there, or propose some immediate means whereby British workmen now unemployed may be engaged at home.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, Sir, I cannot see how anything can be done in this matter. There are no powers whatever in existence for controlling the departure of workmen from this country to take up work elsewhere, whether in connection with a strike or otherwise.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): Was it by order of the Home Secretary that men engaged in these circumstances were escorted by Metropolitan police to the docks?

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

Afforestation in Scotland.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether there has been under consideration a large scheme for re-afforesting 30,000 acres in Scotland; whether the House could be supplied with particulars of that scheme; and, if so, whether, in the near future, he can see any prospect of carrying it into execution.

SIR. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am informed that a scheme of re-afforestation is under the consideration of the Commissioners of woods and forests. The scheme has not yet reached the stage in which it would be desirable for me to enter into details, but I shall be happy to give my hon. friend further information on the subject if matters are, as I hope they may be, satisfactorily completed.

Magistrates and Passive Resistance.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether in view of the fact that three of the magistrates lately appointed in Northamptonshire were passive resisters, he can take any steps to secure that in future appointments men who have refused to be bound by the law shall not be chosen to enforce it.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am not aware whether it is the case that three of the magistrates lately appointed in Northamptonshire were passive resisters, but the fact of a man's being a passive resister when the passive resistance is unaccompanied by brawling or unseemly conduct is not an objection to his being a Justice of the Peace. It has been constantly the practice of men who conscientiously objected to pay rates for the teaching of what they believed to be pernicious doctrine to refuse payment and allow the law to take its course. Such men do not disentitle themselves to the respect of others, and are not disqualified for serving His Majesty.

*MR. LIEF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): Was not John Hampden a Justice of the Peace?

[No Answer was returned.]

Standing Committees.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, if, in view of the proposal of the Government to commit all Bills automatically to Grand Committees, except those specially withheld, he will make arrangements for official reports to be taken of all proceedings before Standing Committees.

SIR H. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN: My hon. friend has asked me to reply to this question. I see no necessity myself for altering the present arrangement for reporting the proceedings of Standing Committees, but of course it will be open for the House to discuss the matter when the new procedure proposals are before it.

PERSONAL STATEMENT.

MR. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make a personal explanation. On the 26th of November last,† certain charges against me in reference to the conduct of my newspaper were brought before the House by means of a letter addressed to Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker ruled that no question of breach of privilege arose on them, but, by the indulgence of the House, I was permitted to make a statement. I informed the House that the charges had been made in my constituency during the past three years, that the majority of the electors had shown their opinion of them by twice returning me to Parliament, on the last occasion by a majority of over 4,000 votes, and in the proportion of six to one against a candidate selected and supported against me on the ground of these very charges by the persons who had again given them publicity. I stated that, the matter having been brought directly before the House, it was my intention to take such line of action as should, after consultation with my friends, appear to them and to me to be the most consistent with my own honour and the honour of the House. The statement is now being made and widely circulated that, in violation of my pledge, I have allowed the matter to drop and have taken no action upon it. This, Sir, is not the fact. The fact is that on the day after the question was raised in the House, namely on the 27th of November, I put myself in communication with the local representatives of the Party to which I owe my two elections to Parliament as the Member for Thanet, and on 30th November I wrote a letter in the following terms—

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† See (4) *Debates*, clxv., 1254–8.

"6, Cavendish Square, W.
30th November, 1906.

"Colonel Rowland Hill, J.P.
(President of the Isle of Thanet Conservative and Constitutional Association),
"Willoughby Lodge, Margate.

"Dear Colonel Hill,

"On the 27th instant I sent you, in your personal capacity, a reprint of an incident which arose in the House of Commons on the previous day, and intimated my early intention of writing to you officially on the subject. I feel that, having regard to the place where, and the circumstances under which, this last attack has been made, the right course for me to take is to place myself in your hands. The only new element in the situation is furnished by the allusions which have been made to my newspaper, the *Financial News*, in the case of Rex *v.* Jonas. I enclose you all the papers in this matter, with verbatim extracts from the standard reference books. The originals are at your disposal if you desire to see them.

"If, in the opinion of the Central Council, or in your opinion, as a result of these or any other circumstances, I have in any degree forfeited the confidence which the constituency has twice, with increasing emphasis, reposed in me, I shall take whatever course you and the Central Council desire. I place myself unreservedly in your hands, and submit myself to your judgment as to my attitude—in respect of which I have no desire greater than this, that it may always command in the future, as I am proud to believe it has commanded in the past, the approval, the confidence, and the goodwill of my friends and neighbours of the Isle of Thanet.

"Yours faithfully,
"(Signed) H. H. MARKS."

To this I received the following reply:—

"Willoughby Lodge,
"Margate,
11th December, 1906.

"Dear Mr. MARKS,

"The Central Council yesterday considered your letter to me of the 27th ult. and unanimously adopted the resolutions which I enclose. The council fully approved of your statement in the House of Commons and of your action in placing yourself unreservedly in their hands.

"We considered first the advisability of your taking an action for libel. We were against this; all the matters in question, with one exception, were before the electors twice in 1904, once in 1906.

"In 1904 we had the Court of Enquiry, in 1904 we had the election, and in 1906 we had the election, and on each occasion you came through the ordeal triumphantly. To ask you now to take action would be to stultify ourselves and to cause the electors of Thanet to be objects of ridicule.

"With regard to your seeking re-election the above arguments hold good; besides, to put you to the expense of an election for the sake of sixteen nonentities would be too absurd.

"We then proceeded to investigate the new charge, and after a prolonged inquiry thoroughly and unanimously satisfied ourselves that it was utterly false. At the commencement of the proceedings, I warned the representatives present that they were not there as your friends or partisans, but that they would be answerable to their own associations and to the electors of Thanet at large for any decision they came to. Personally it affords me much pleasure in forwarding to you the resolutions as passed. I cordially agree with the decision arrived at.

"Believe me, Yours sincerely,
"(Signed) R. HILL.
"President Central Council
Thanet Division."

The resolutions are as follows:—

"The Central Council of the Isle of Thanet Conservative and Constitutional Associations (which has represented the Conservative Party in the Division ever since it has been a constituency) having before it the letter from the member for the constituency, in which he placed himself unreservedly in its hands as to the course he should take with reference to the communication addressed by sixteen electors to the Speaker of the House of Commons, has given the matter and all the issues raised by it the most careful consideration, and finds:—

"(a) That the allegations made are, with one exception, those which were before the electors in 1904 and 1906.

"(b) That complete investigation has proved the falsity of this new charge.

"The Council resolves:—

"(1) That the question of Mr. Marks' fitness as a Member of the House of

Commons, raised in the letter to the Speaker, was purely one for the majority of the constituency, who twice returned him as their representative.

"(2) That this Council is of opinion that Mr. Marks has done nothing since his election to forfeit the confidence of the constituency; that this Council desires to place on record its unabated confidence in him, its high appreciation of his public services, and its entire satisfaction with him as the representative of the Division in Parliament.

"(3) That copies of these Resolutions be sent to the Speaker of the House of Commons, to Mr. Marks and the Press."

These Resolutions were subsequently submitted to and unanimously approved by the six local Conservative Associations in the constituency, and communicated to Mr. Speaker and the Press. They accurately represent the considered opinions of those who sent me here. I thank the House for the indulgence it has extended to me under circumstances rendered the more difficult by reason of the fact that one of the matters involved, upon which particular stress is laid, is even now *sub judice.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) pointed out that the Motion put down by the Prime Minister for the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule was not in accordance with the Standing Order, and asked if it might not therefore be debated.

*MR. SPEAKER said the Motion departed from the form prescribed in the Standing Order in respect only of one word. He assumed that the Prime Minister had intended to put the Motion in the form laid down in the Standing Order. Perhaps the Motion had better be put in that form.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I suppose, Sir, you have considered whether it is in the power of the Chair to put in a different form a Motion of which notice has been given?

*MR. SPEAKER: I think that would be raising too highly technical a point. It is clear what was intended.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am no lover of techical points. I have been bitten by them too often. But I should not have been doing my duty if I had not asked your opinion, Sir, and I hope that the Government or those responsible, will see that in future the Standing Orders are complied with. What business is to be taken if the Motion be carried?

SIR. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, in assenting to the Speaker's suggestion, said the Leader of the Opposition was but discharging his duty in keeping them right, however slight a slip might have been made. With regard to the business he hoped to get Report of the Supplementary Estimates, the Resolution in Ways and Means and Report of the Navy Votes A and 1, or Report of the Army Votes A and 1, whichever might be the most convenient.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he thought the House would like to continue the discussion of the Navy Vote during the normal hours of sitting.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said he was quite willing to make a deal with the right hon. Gentleman. Would he give them Report of both the Army and Navy Votes on Thursday?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR thought the suggestion a reasonable one, especially as considerable time had already been given to the discussion of Army matters, and they were promised another debate immediately after Easter.

MR. MOORE asked if hon. Members whose starred questions were not reached on a given day were not entitled to have the Answers circulated with the Votes the next morning. He found that the replies to Unionist Questions were not circulated that morning while those to Nationalist Questions were.

*MR. SPEAKER: It is a well known rule that if a Question is not reached the Answer shall be handed in at the table and circulated with the Question the next morning.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): As this is the fifth suspension of the eleven o'clock rule in eighteen working days, is it not tantamount to saying that the suspension of business at eleven o'clock is a failure? I put that question to the Leader of the House.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. That is a question as to a matter of opinion.

NOTICE OF MOTION.

Mr. REDDY (King's County, Birr): On this day fortnight to move for a small committee to inquire into the mental qualities of the Member for North Armagh, so as to prevent the brain storms he suffers from here.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Member should not give notice of such a Motion, and I shall disregard it.

Mr. REDDY: I beg to withdraw it.

SHOPS (No. 2) BILL.

Order for Second Reading upon Friday, 3rd May, read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures: Mr. Charles Nicholson, Mr. Manfield, and Mr. Crombie; and had appointed in substitution: Dr. Pollard, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. James Murray.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping and Manufactures, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Education Acts Amendment Bill: Mr. Walter Rea, Mr. Frederick Edwin Smith, Mr. Masterman, Mr. Parker, Mr. Rees, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Lough, Mr. Leif Jones, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Talbot, Sir Berkeley Sheffield, Mr. Butcher, Mr. Ellis Davies, Mr. Richardson, and Sir Edwin Cornwall.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion when the Business is postponed this day, be resumed and proceeded with, though opposed, after the interruption of Business."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 318; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 40.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbert Henry
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barlow, John Emmott (Somerset
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine

Colonel Lockwood.

Black, Arthur W.
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T. (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.

Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clarke, C. Goddard
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Coats, Sir T. Glen (Renfrew, W.)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cogan, Denis J.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm J. (S. Pancras, W.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H. (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.
Dickinson, W. H (St. Pancras, N.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles

Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Frank (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Esslemont, George Birnie
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Col. Alan (Hereford, S.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T, Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law. Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk Bg'hs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meehan, Patrick A.
Menzies, Walter
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Coonnor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Palmer, Sir Charles Mark
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinburgh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th)
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Hn A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J. W. H (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Sir John L. (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)

Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Whitbread, Howard
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Young, Samuel

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt Hn A. J (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Hon. Guy (Winchester)
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hon Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest (Berks, East)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Gordon, Sir W. Evans-(T'r Ham.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hon Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt Hon. Col. W.
Lambton, Hon. Frederick W. M.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants., Fareham
Liddell, Henry
Lockwood Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col, A, R,
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn Walter (Dublin, S.)
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington)
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Rt. Hn J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Lord Balcarres.

SUPPLY [26th February] REPORT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate [6th March] on Amendment to Second Resolution, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £10,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions, Committees, and Special Inquiries."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out '£10,000,' and insert '£9,000.'"—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Question again proposed, "That '£10,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

Lord ROBERT CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said he did not propose to detain the House at any length, but there was one question which he was unable to raise in Committee, owing to the operation of the Closure, upon which he desired to say a few words. This Vote included a sum of money for the Poor Law Commission. That Commission, appointed to consider a large variety of subjects, not only had been sitting for some time, but, as he understood, was likely to continue sitting for some time to come. He wished to know whether the Government proposed to postpone any attempt to deal with questions affecting the administration of the Poor Law, the unemployed, and so on, until the Report of the Commission was laid upon the Table; or whether they were going to suggest to the Commission that they should make some interim Report in order that the Government might be enabled to deal with some of the minor questions quite apart from the bigger problems. Certain small reforms had been suggested which he could not help feeling would be of great value if means could be found of carrying them out. There was, for instance, the difficulty of transferring labour from one part of the country to another. It constantly happened that there was an immense demand for labour in one part of the country, a demand so great that the local industries of the district were expiring for want of labour, whilst at the same time, in another part of the country, there was a vast excess of labour and people were seeking employment and unable to find it. At the present time Lancashire was in a difficulty owing to lack of labour, while in London there was an excess. Would the Government hold out hope that they would be able to deal with that kind of question before the Commission reported, or that they would hasten the Report? There were other questions that might be dealt with relating to the aged poor and children, and the like—questions which did not touch the great controversial matters, but which, nevertheless, the Government ought to deal with. He would also be glad to know whether the Government had any idea of how long it would be before the Commission reported. It was a very able Commission, and one in which they had every confidence; but it had now been considering the question for one year, and it had been said it might sit for another two before it reported. Therefore he hoped the Government would consider these observations in a sympathetic spirit.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said he wished to draw the attention of the Government to the non-production of the Report of the West Ridgeway Committee, and he regretted that the Under-Secretary, or someone representing the Government, was not in the House to answer him. The House was asked to vote money for a Committee of which they were not allowed to see the Report. How was it possible for the House, under those circumstances, to say whether the money was properly spent? Their chief duty was to prevent the waste of public money. But how were they to do that if they were not allowed to see the result of the investigation? This Committee was appointed, at the request of the hon. Member for the Central Division of Sheffield, to inquire into various important matters in respect to the new Constitutions in South Africa, especially the social condition of the populations. No doubt the Report contained matters of great interest with which the House ought to be acquainted. But the Prime Minister had said that the Ridgeway Report was necessarily condefintial, and he doubted whether the documents ought to be laid on the Table. The Committee came back on the 23rd July, and the right hon. Gentleman was asked by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, when he intended to lay the Report on the Table, and again the right hon. Gentleman said that the Report was necessarily of a confidential character and would not be laid on the Table. The only apparent reason for the changed attitude of the Government was that the Report did not support their views with regard to the new Constitution of the Colonies, and that therefore the Government thought the only way out of the difficulty would be to keep it absolutely secret. In November the Prime Minister was again asked when he proposed to lay the Paper on the Table, and again the reply was that the Committee sent to South Africa was essentially of a confidential nature, and, that being so, the Government did not propose to consider the publication of the Report until after the new Constitutions had been granted. The House, therefore, had not only been compelled to consider the new Constitution of the Transvaal without seeing the Report, but they would also have to consider this year the question of the new Constitution of the Orange River Colony under the same conditions. After that, the Government were going to consider whether or not they would publish the Report. He thought the Government were treating the House rather cavalierly in the matter. On 31st July last year, when the debate on the Transvaal Constitution was proceeding in another place, Lord Lansdowne asked Lord Ripon a question with reference to a persistent rumour of so widespread a character that he could not disregard it, namely, that the Report of the Committee had been issued only on the 31st July. Lord Ripon was unable to answer the noble Lord; but if the rumour was correct, the Government must have made up their mind with regard to the Constitution of the Transvaal before the Report was issued. Probably the Report was not what they wished, and, therefore, they simply disregarded it and laid down certain rules. He thought, however, that the House ought to have the Report, because no doubt it would throw some light on the very serious accusation made against the Government by the hon. Member for Dulwich on the previous day—that they had gerrymandered the Transvaal Constitution.

*THE SPEAKER: Order. The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to embark on that discussion. As long as he confines himself to the subject of the South African Constitution Commission and the demand for the production of a Report, he is in order; but the wider question does not arise on this narrower issue.

MR. ASHLEY said that as he was precluded from going into the other matter, as he had intended to do, he could only suggest that it would be well if the Government allowed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, to see the Report in confidence. In another case the Government had allowed an hon. Member of the House the same privilege with regard to the Report of another Committee, and if permission in this instance were extended to the right hon. Gentleman, he could promise that nothing would be allowed to leak out.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.) said he would answer, as far as he could, the Question of the noble Lord with regard to the Poor Law Commission. The noble Lord was, of course, aware, that after the appointment of the Commission, and the settlement of the terms of reference, the Government had no authority over them, and all they could do was to await their Report. With regard to this Commission, in his opinion it was the most important of our time. The terms of reference were extremely full. Perhaps the House would permit him to read them—

> "To inquire (1) into the working of the laws relating to the relief of poor persons in the United Kingdom. (2) Into the various means which have been adopted outside of the Poor Laws for meeting distress arising from want of employment, particularly during periods of severe industrial depression; and to consider and report whether any, and, if so, what modifications of the Poor Law, or changes in their administration, or fresh legislation for dealing with distress, are advisable."

Not only were the terms of reference of a very weighty character, but under Poor-Law administration alone they had to deal with subjects of the vastest character. There were 645 boards of guardians, 22,486 officials, and the membership of the boards of guardians must be anything up to 30,000. There were at the present time nearly 250,000 pauper inmates, and over half a million in receipt of outdoor relief. We were spending year by year about £14,250,000 on Poor-Law administration of one kind and another. Therefore, they would see that the Commission had to inquire, under Poor-Law administration alone, into very grave and far-reaching social problems. Up to the 2nd of last month the Commission had held eighty-three meetings, and had examined a large number of witnesses, and they had made visits to a number of places, such as Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield. It was impossible for him to say when they were likely to report. He knew that, with the exception of short vacations, they had been meeting every week, and had been devoting themselves to work with all industry and expedition. He agreed that it was desirable that they should report as soon as possible, because of the grave questions to which the noble Lord had very properly referred—questions which he was happy to think were altogether outside Party politics. It was desirable, at the same time, that the Report should be thorough and reliable, because great issues were involved. The noble Lord had asked him as to questions which were still pending—would the Government be compelled to await the Report of the Royal Commission. He very much doubted whether that question was in order in connection with this Vote, and he doubted whether they were entitled to discuss what the Government might do. All he could say was that he himself had been more than amazed at the extraordinary industry—and he said it with great sincerity—which his right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board had put into everything which had come to his hand in the way of Poor-Law administration, and the noble Lord must be aware of that because inquiries had already been set on foot in certain directions with regard to administration. More than that he did not think he was entitled to say under the rules of the House. The noble Lord had asked if they would inquire whether the deliberations of the Commission must be still further prolonged, and whether they could be requested to furnish an interim Report on certain pressing points. He would communicate with the President of the Local Government Board to see whether they could with propriety address the Royal Commission, asking them what they could do to meet the noble Lord's proposal. He was afraid that was all he could properly say under the rules of the House, but he trusted it would be sufficient to induce the noble Lord not to move the reduction standing in his name.

MR. J. WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) asked whether farm colonies came within the words of the reference "various means" outside the Poor Law for dealing with unemployment, and whether the Commission would consider the effect they had on rates of wages in the various districts where they happened to be established. He had very good reason for asking the question, because for some time they had been discussing the rate of wages at Ipswich barracks. They had succeeded in getting the War Office to agree to a certain rate of wages. Only that week four men had been sent from Hadleigh Colony, which was under the Salvation Army, but which, he was afraid, was also subsidised from public funds to a certain extent, to work at the Ipswich barracks. Those men were only allowed to work if they would take ½d. an hour under the usual rate. They applied for the full rate, thinking that as they were to be engaged on public works they were entitled to a proper rate of pay. He had received that very morning from the four men to whom he referred, a letter stating that having asked for proper pay they were not allowed to return to the colony and were stranded in Ipswich. He had advised them to apply to the town council for the purpose of seeing whether something could not be done to get them out of their difficulty. He would like to hear the Parliamentary Secretary's view on the question of farm colonies for the unemployed in connection with the rate of wages in the various districts where they happened to be, and he thought the attention of the Poor Law Commission should be drawn to the point, as it was a most important matter.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said he wished to ask a question about the Welsh Church Commission. There had been various statements in the Press to the effect that there was disagreement between the Chairman of that Commission and certain of its members. The Secretary to the Local Government Board had told them that his Department was not concerned with the conduct of business by a Royal Commission. That, he imagined, was the ordinary constitutional position to take up. However, in the newspapers, apparently with the authenticity of an official communication, it was said, three or four days ago, that there was a difference of opinion as to the interpretation of the reference to the Welsh Church Commission and as to the conduct of business by the chairman of the Commission. It was said, moreover, that they were in such a state of difficulty that arbitrators had had to be called in, and further that the arbitrators nominated were the Lord Chancellor and the President of the Board of Trade. He did not wish to discriminate between two Members of the Cabinet. One of these arbitrators was a distinguished person of judicial mind, but, with all respect to the President of the Board of Trade, he scarcely thought that on the question of the Established Church in Wales it could be alleged that he approached the subject from an impartial point of view. He would be very glad to hear that the statement that the Lord Chancellor was to be an arbitrator was correct, but that the President of the Board of Trade had not been called upon to interfere on a subject on which he was an avowed and acknowledged partisan.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said that the provision for £1,400 for the Welsh Church Commission carried them up to the end of the current financial year. He would like to know how long provision on this account was likely to be required. Judging from the way in which the proceedings were frequently interrupted to consider the terms of the reference it would seem that further provision on account of this Commission might appear even in another Supplementary Estimate. Could the Secretary to the Treasury give them any intimation as to how long the Commission were likely to sit? He would also like to know whether they were paid in a lump sum to each member, or by the sitting, or how they were remunerated. He presumed that this reference to arbitrators was a very unusual proceeding. So far as the people of Wales were concerned, however, they would view the appointment of the President of the Board of Trade as one of the arbitrators not only with equanimity, but with satisfaction. There was a strong feeling in Wales that the terms of the reference should have been more carefully drafted, and that its purview should have been long since explicitly ascertained. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the delay which had already taken place in dealing with the matter, and he would like the Secretary to the Treasury to answer his questions. If he would do so the Welsh people would be extremely grateful.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York), referring to the West Ridgeway Committee, said that not only the Members of the House but the public who had to pay the £4,000 for its expenses were entitled to see the Report which was issued by the Committee on their return to London. The Members of the Committee went out last April; they returned last July. When the Transvaal Constitution was discussed in the House seven hon. Members out of every ten went through the debate without the facts before them. The Prime Minister himself, earlier in the session, said, "We are in woeful ignorance." He presumed the right hon. Gentleman did not at that time mean the House but the Government. But a large part of the House was in woeful ignorance of the conditions under which the Government had acted. They had information in the shape of the Report which was denied to the rest of the House. He thought it was time that the Report of the Ridgeway Committee was made public, as there was a growing opinion outside the House that it was not published because the decision of the Government did not march with the terms of the Report, it being believed that the Report went one way and the decision of the Government on which the Constitution was granted, another. If that was the case it seemed to raise a very serious state of things. Until it had been distinctly stated by the representative of the Colonies that it would be against the interests of the public service that any disclosure of the Report should be made, the disquiet which had been caused would not be allayed, and any further delay in publication would but intensify the disquiet already existing.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he wished to ask a question about the care of the feeble-minded. He scarcely knew to which hon. Member on the Treasury Bench to address his question, but he would put it to the Secretary to the Treasury. There was an additional £1,300 required, and, according to a footnote, it was wanted for the remuneration of medical investigators. He had looked at the original Estimates, and on page 510 he found that the salaries were put down at £872. An increase of £1,300 for salaries was an enormous amount; in fact, it was something like 150 per cent. of an increase. He was inclined to think that there must have been a large number of feeble-minded people last year. [AN HON. MEMBER: It is through the general election.] A little further on he found that the remuneration to medical investigators for 1906–7 was £630. In the year 1905–6 there was no remuneration at all for medical investigators, and therefore he presumed that in that year there were no medical investigators. After raising in 1906–7 £630 more than the previous year, they were now being asked to provide another £1,300 for the same object. There must be something very curious in the care of the feeble-minded last year, and he hoped the hon. Member would be able to give the House a satisfactory explanation. He noticed also that there was an increase of £1,200 for the expenses of the Poor Law Commission. He found that there was £872 for the secretary, assistant secretary, clerical assistance, and typewriting, and allowance of £110 for messengers, but there was no item at all for investigators, which was apparently a new item. With regard to the West Ridgeway Committee Report, they were told in the debate yesterday that there was only a demand for three more seats by the Progressives in the Transvaal that they actually obtained. What a difficulty that placed the House and the country in. The very important question had been raised as to whether the finding of this Committee was an impartial one or not, and they were told that it was impartial, but nevertheless it was thought advisable to withhold the Report from publication. They were told that the Report was such that it very nearly met the demand of one particular political Party in South Africa, and, notwithstanding that, the Government continued to refuse to place the Report before the House. It was not a question of whether it cost £4,000 or not. When they went to the expense and trouble of an important inquiry like this in South Africa, he agreed that it should not be presented to the public too soon, in order that the Government might have time to determine what their course of action should be. But even after the Government had resolved upon their course of action they still persisted in refusing to publish the Report, although it was so vital to the interests of the country and the Empire. With regard to the Welsh Church Commission, he could not help noting that there was considerable feeling on the other side of the House. He had heard it stated that nobody wanted the Commission, or, at any rate, they did not want it in its present form. If that was the case why should they spend another £1,400 upon it? They did not know what the total cost would be, but they knew that the cost was to be £1,400 more than was at first supposed. An hon. Gentleman opposite who seemed to consider that the Commission was going to last a long time wanted to know whether the Commissioners were paid. He did not know whether the hon. Gentleman asked that question because he was of opinion that it was somebody's interest to cause delay. The House should have some justification for the Commission, which, according to two supporters of the Government, was either not being carried on in a business-like manner or was not wanted at all. He hoped that before the debate closed an answer would be given on these points.

*MR. ELLIS DAVIES (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) said the hon. Member for the Chorley Division had thought fit to doubt the attitude that was likely to be assumed towards the Welsh Church Commission by the President of the Board of Trade. He did not know whether the noble Lord had studied the composition of the Commission, but he thought that the Welsh nation had a good right to complain of its composition, inasmuch as six of its nine members were members of the Church of England, while the great majority of the Welsh people were Nonconformists. The objection he took was not so much to the character of the Commission as to its appointment altogether.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that point is open to discussion on this Vote, which is only for a supplementary sum and not for the original cost of the Commission.

*MR. ELLIS DAVIES said that the Welsh nation, not having requested the appointment of the Commission, had a right to enter a caveat to any Report that might be presented. So far as he understood, the inquiry was being made by the Commissioners for the purpose of obtaining certain facts and statistics, and the Nonconformists raised no objection to any inquiry of that kind. In the past there had been a difficulty in ascertaining the real position of the Church and Nonconformity in Wales, and the important matter for the present was that the statistics placed before the Commissioners should be in such a form as to be not only accessible to the public but also capable of being tested. For example, they should relate to exactly the same divisions so that comparison would, for instance, be possible as to each parish, and he understood that the dispute among the Commissioners was as to the limit and scope of their inquiries. In any event, before the Commission reported it was only fair to say that as Wales had never asked for it they felt that they would not in any way be bound by its Report, be it what it might.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) said he desired to echo the remarks made by the hon. Member for York with regard to the suppression of the Report of the Ridgeway Committee. On the last occasion they were only allowed twenty-four minutes for discussing this matter before they were closured, and the Under-Secretary for the Colonies then stated that it was inadvisable in the interests of the public here and in the Transvaal to publish a great deal of the Report. They would accept an expurgated edition if they could not have it all. They wished to know the conclusions arrived at by the Committee, and the least the Under-Secretary could do was to offer them a perusal of the Report, or at any rate let the late Colonial Secretary see it. The public had to pay £4,000 for the Committee going to South Africa and they had a right to know what the Report contained. The Government had shown not the faintest reason for suppressing the Report, and he believed they had suppressed it because it did not fit in with the Constitution they had given to the Transvaal. He asked the Under-Secretary whether he would inform the House if the Committee did report in favour of responsible government's being given to the Transvaal on the lines on which it had been given.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) said it was rumoured that the Report of the Ridgeway Committee was signed on 31st July, the very day on which the Transvaal Constitution was announced in Parliament. He thought some explanation was due to the House of so singular a circumstance. It suggested to the average mind that the Government had practically come to its conclusion as to what the Constitution of the Transvaal should be, independently of that Report. It was surely reasonable to suppose that the Ridgeway Committee discussed their Report among themselves and digested the evidence which they had gathered from day to day, and that they could not and did not come to their final conclusion as to what the exact form of the Report should be until they signed it. A definite question as to the date on which the Report was signed was put by Lord Lansdowne in another place and no satisfactory reply had been given. He asked the Under-Secretary: Did the Government come to its conclusions concerning the Constitution to be given to the Transvaal practically independently in many particulars of the considered decision of the Ridgeway Committee? No one could doubt the right of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to draft a Constitution absolutely independently of that Committee. But the Committee was paid for by the taxpayers of this country, and they went out, as the Prime Minister and others responsible for the Colonial Government had stated, to gather evidence, not for the people of the country, but for members of the Cabinet themselves. They had some right to protest against public money being spent in that way while the House was supplied with no evidence on which the action of the Government could be criticised. But rumours came to them in many forms; these things could not be kept entirely secret, and there was information from a good many quarters in South Africa that evidence was given which no reasonable being could suppose ought to be withheld from the House. The Government were going to give a Constitution to the Orange River Colony. There was a grave question in connection with the granting of that Constitution. The Ridgeway Committee went to Bloemfontein and took evidence from representative Dutch and British settlers. Petitions were sent into the

Ridgeway Committee by the settlers in the Orange River Colony on the supposition that they would be printed in the Report of the Ridgeway Committee and submitted to the House. They gave their evidence freely. They were afraid of the future. They had been up to the present time in a position of great security. The Government had given almost patriarchal consideration to them, and properly so. They were looking forward with great anxiety to their future position in the Orange River Colony under the new Constitution. They took great trouble and went to considerable expense to give the necessary information to the Ridgeway Committee, hoping and believing that the British public would have an opportunity of judging of the value of the evidence they sent in. He submitted that the House ought to get the whole of the Report of the Ridgeway Committee, but if they could not get it, they ought to get those portions of it which referred to the question of land settlement in South Africa. He was not pressing the matter from the standpoint of Party politics. The Under-Secretary had given a good deal of information on land settlement, but not sufficient. The Government were going to base the new Constitution of the Orange River Colony on the Report of the Ridgeway Committee, but they were going to withhold that Report from the House and the people of the country. He held that they had a right to have the Report. He appealed to the Prime Minister to give them an opportunity of reading the whole Report, or, at any rate, the portion dealing with land settlement.

Mr. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.) wished to associate himself with the protest against the Vote of £1,400 for the expenses of the Welsh Disestablishment Commission, because he felt that in expressing regret that the Commission had been appointed at all, he reflected the opinion of the large mass of the Welsh people. Wales had sent to the House of Commons a solid body of Progressive Members, and if a general election was to count for anything at all, it ought to count for the expression of Wales in favour of Welsh Disestablishment without the necessity of a Royal Commission. He did not desire now to discuss the work of the Commission, which, however, had been subjected to one arbitration, and he did not know how many others it would be subjected to; but it seemed to him that all the evidence pointed to the fact that the Commission ought not to have been appointed at all, and that the voice of Wales at the general election ought to have been accepted as expressed through the solid phalanx of Members sent to the House of Commons from Wales. He was bound to say that when money was short, and when millions were wanted to deal with social problems, the Government would have consulted the wishes of the people if they had devoted the money being wasted on this Commission to matters of social reform. Wales had made up its mind on the question of Disestablishment, no matter what the Report of this Commission might be.

*Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he wanted to raise some points in regard to the South African Committee—points which had not yet been raised in debate. The Committee consisted of three distinguished gentlemen who took evidence in South Africa and came back home. But before they reached this country rumours were circulated that the Committee were going to draw up a Report which would be against the known desires of His Majesty's Ministers. Those rumours became more prevalent after the arrival of the members of the Committee. There might be nothing in the rumours; he could not tell. Following upon those rumours, however, there was the refusal of His Majesty's Government to publish the Report of the Committee, and the reason given was that it could not be published until after the Constitution to be given to the Transvaal had been promulgated, and after the elections for the Transvaal Parliament had taken place. The elections for the Transvaal Government had taken place, but the country knew nothing about the Report of the Committee except for the result of these elections. On the previous night the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister had thrown a certain amount of light on what was assumed to be the labours of that Committee, judging from the result of the first elections to the Transvaal Parliament. He himself did not hesitate to say that the figures given by the right hon. Gentleman in the way he presented them were grossly misleading—he did not say intentionally, but undoubtedly misleading. The Prime Minister said that the Progressives were supported by 17,694 votes and that they gained twenty-one seats; that the Nationalists, Independents, and Labour men and other classes of British non-Progressives had 19,788 votes, or 2,000 more than the Progressives, and the Het Volk had 23,769 votes. He quite agreed that those figures corresponded with the accounts published in South Africa and in *The Times* newspaper. So far his figures were accurate, but he then went on to analyse those figures. To begin with, the right hon. Gentleman referred to the fact that the Nationalist, Independent, and Labour Parties were non-Progressive and British, but he did not draw attention to the fact that six Nationalists were in Party alliance with——

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not see how this question is relevant to the Report of the Committee? The hon. Member is going rather beyond the Vote now before the House.

*MR. COURTHOPE said, with great deference, that the figures given by the Prime Minister were the only light they had at all on the result of the work done by the Committee.

*MR. SPEAKER: They do not seem to me to be strictly relevant to the question of the publication of the Report. The hon. Member must confine himself to that.

*MR. COURTHOPE said he hoped that some other opportunity would occur when he might criticise the misleading nature of those figures. As to publication, surely the Report must naturally fall more or less into two parts. It dealt with two Colonies. Could not the Report so far as it dealt with the Transvaal be published and given to the House? The objection that was alleged to its publication had disappeared altogether, and in the absence of the publication of the Report and of the direct testimony which it would have given to the work of the Commission they had to look about for outside evidence, which consisted of those ugly rumours to which he had referred. The consequence was that having no direct evidence, and knowing that His Majesty's Ministers possessed that direct evidence, and would not allow them to see it, they were naturally inclined to believe the indirect circumstantial evidence and to come to the conclusion which everything substantial pointed to, viz., that the report of the Commission was adverse to the action which His Majesty's Government had taken; in other words, that His Majesty's Ministers had made up their minds as to their course of action before that Report was received, and that the sending out of the Commission was simply a waste of money. He hoped the Prime Minister would see his way even now to allow so much of that Report as referred to the Transvaal, if it could be divided, to be laid on the Table so as to do away with the doubts which certainly existed. There was one other point. He noticed the list of Commissions not specifically provided for only accounted for £11,800 out of £33,037—just over one-third—and he thought the House was entitled to know where the other £22,000 had gone. There was no mention of it in the Supplementary Estimates nor in the original Estimates of last year, so that they did not in the least know where the money had gone. Did it include the expenses of Mr. Bucknill, for instance? Did it include the expenses of the two Commissioners who met the French Commissioners to discuss the New Hebrides Convention? He thought the House should press for some information as to the expenditure of this £22,000 about which nothing was said in any document which had been given to the House.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The imagination of hon. Members opposite has led them so completely into the wilderness that I think it is only right that I should say a word in order to calm their fears and dispel their delusions. They have discovered a natural phenomenon which I believe Lord Westbury called a *nidus equinus.* There is no foundation whatever for the suspicions and fears which have been heard of from the hon. Member for Rye. The Committee was sent out to South Africa in order that the Government should acquire at first hand through them a better knowledge of the actual state of affairs in South Africa than they could acquire in any other way. The Government chose for the Committee impartial, sensible, level-headed men not likely to be led away by enthusiasm in one direction or another. They fulfilled their purpose admirably, and the Government acted in almost every particular on their recommendations. I might almost leave out the word "almost." Except that there may be some very small things in which a variation was made, in all important matters; for instance, on the crucial point of the distribution of seats in the Legislative Assembly, the Constitution rests on the basis of the recommendations of the Committee. The hon. Member opposite spoke of evidence not being placed before the House of Commons and the country. There was no evidence. There was no appendix to the Blue-book. The members of that Committee sometimes sent private letters to say how they were getting on, and then in their Report they gave a summary of their experiences, of what they had discovered as to the strength of Parties, and in some instances, if I remember rightly, of a change of disposition of Parties which they had discovered in the course of their stay in South Africa. They were in intimate relations with all the leading members of these Parties. They got information from them as to their desire, and the Report is an embodiment of all those pieces of information. When we came to look at the Report, which was an admirable document, we found that it contained a great deal that we thought it might not prove judicious to publish—their commentaries upon Parties in South Africa, the commentaries of the Parties in South Africa on each other. There was a great deal of information in it that had been given confidentially, and also it was of a kind which had possibilities of mischief in the future if the document had become public. That was the sole reason for keeping it private. It has been referred to as if we kept it back in order that we might by some dreadful hocus-pocus, like a wizard concocting a draught with which to poison the new State in South Africa, deal with it in some horrible manner. There was no idea of the sort; and, as I have said, as to the main design of which we are suspected—that of gerrymandering—the Constitution of the Transvaal is as the Committee recommended that it should be, without interference from London at all. The whole thing is a delusion; and, really, I would invite hon. Members to get hold of something more bodily and tangible and not invent hobgoblins with which to frighten people. There is not any truth at all in the idea that the Government have nefariously either departed from, or dealt in some other way with, this Report. Having said this, and adhering to the opinion, which is as strong with me now as it was at the time, that it would not be judicious to make it an absolutely public document, I do not know that I compromise the dignity of the Government too much if I say that I do not see any reason whatever why, for instance, the late Secretary of State for the Colonies should not see the Report. It would do no harm for him to see it—not in the least. I do not know that it is not putting the function upon him that perhaps he ought not to assume of standing in the room of all his colleagues and followers and pronouncing a judgment on this matter, as it were, in their name. But that at least would explain what I thought, and still think, from my recollection of what is now a somewhat old story, was the well-founded fear we had as to the publication of a confidential Report, the value of which was that it did deal freely and frankly with the situation, and did report freely and frankly what people said to each other. There might not have been anything very terrible in it; but at the same time it was dangerous and explosive matter, and might prove so even in the future after the Constitution had been granted—that was the idea we had. I think it was the right idea. We will adhere to the principle of keeping it a private document; but I am perfectly willing that the right hon. Gentleman should see it; and I feel certain that he will be able to dispose of the exaggerated ideas with regard to it which have pervaded the minds of hon. Gentleman opposite.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the right hon. Gentleman say something about land settlement?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is included.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): I think my hon. friends have been amply justified in their action in having drawn from the Prime Minister the statement he has now made. Had such a statement been made months ago this question would not have occupied so much of the Government's time.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My hon. friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies has said exactly the same thing from the first.

MR. LYTTELTON: I trust it will be accepted from me that it is quite new and very important that the Prime Minister should have stated to-day that in substance the Government have followed the Report of the Committee. After what the Prime Minister has said as to certain confidences in the Report which might have led me to certain conclusions, I fully accept his opinion as regards the undesirability of publishing. The concession which the Prime Minister so handsomely makes puts me in rather a difficult position. I do not want confirmation of the Prime Minister's word, which I take wherever it is given, and therefore it is not necessary that I should see the Report. I could not use it. I would not show it to the Press. I could not, unless so instructed, show it to hon. Gentlemen this side of the House, although there are precedents for a contrary course. Fully appreciating, therefore, the courteous terms in which the Prime Minister has made the offer, I think it would be undesirable that I should avail myself of it. I wish to say one word on the charge of gerrymandering. I never made that charge against the Government; but the Under-Secretary, although he has not made a charge of gerrymandering against me personally, in his speech of July last year has made a distinct charge against the parties in the Transvaal of gerrymandering; and it is most natural that, this charge having been proved to be entirely unfounded, some counter-charges should have been made in retaliation.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I wish to thank the right hon. Gentleman for the tone of his speech regarding myself. The declination of the offer is in accordance with my own instinct, but it is the only offer I could make. One other thing might have been done. The Report might have been "bowdlerised" by cutting out with perfect honesty passages not intended for publication, and regarded as not desirable to make public. But I have been strongly of opinion, and my colleagues agree with me, that to cut and carve the Report would be worse than either of the other courses.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) thought that the absence of Nationalist Members pointed to that conspiracy of silence which they had found to exist between those Members and the present Government. It was hardly fair to ask the Ulster Members to pass two new Votes of £3,000 and £1,800 without one word of explanation as to what they were for. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had only just come into the House, no doubt feeling certain that he would not be questioned by hon. Members below the gangway, but he would remind him that even Ulster Members had some rights, and were entitledto an explanation of these Votes.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Glamorganshire, Rhondda) said he felt bound to associate himself with the demand which had been made for an explanation of the item dealing with the Welsh Church Commission. They were told that a certain amount of work was necessary in order to gather information as to the position of the Church in Wales. He had the honour, twenty-two years ago, of delivering his maiden speech in the House upon that question, and the matter had been under discussion ever since. All the facts and figures that could be adduced had been before them over and over again. He had no objection to either Party when in power spending sums which were necessary in Commissions, but as a Welsh Nonconformist he considered that the present Commission was totally unnecessary. The case had been made out for disestablishment as fully as ever it could be made. He did not object to the Commission as a Commission, but that morning he had read in a daily paper that Royal Commissions were a more or less easy way of shelving a question. That was what caused him now to address the House. Speaking on behalf of every Welsh Member he asked for an assurance from the Government that they were not instituting an inquiry for the purpose of shelving this great and important question in the Principality. If such was the Government's intention, he warned them that, as they met with obstruction from the Irish Benches, they would not escape it from the Welsh. They believed their cause had been recognised as true and just throughout Wales. For twenty years at least they had discussed it. Now they wanted a guarantee from the Government such as had been given to the Nationalists. If there was one question more than another which touched the hearts of Welshmen it was this. He called upon the Government, therefore, to carry out their promises with regard to the disestablishment of the Welsh Church.

*Mr. MORTON (Sutherland) said he would have preferred to raise the questions he was about to bring to the attention of the House in Committee, but owing to the closure there was not time. He did not object to the expenditure in connection with South Africa, as he thought the result had been well worth the money, but he would like to associate himself with hon. Members representing Wales in condemning the expenditure for the Welsh Church Commission. The item was wasteful and unnecessary. It would, however, be wrong to accuse the Government of an attempt to shelve questions in this way, because, as everybody knew, all these questions could not be settled in a session or two. He agreed that all the information that could be obtained with regard to the Welsh question had been obtained over and over again. With regard to the Congested Districts (Ireland) Commission he would like to know what that Commission had been doing, the names of the Commissioners, how they had been employed, and what amount of money they had had out of it. He also wished to know whether, as he had gathered from the newspapers they had, this Commission had taken away the Chairman of the Scottish Fisheries Board. He did not believe in a public official's being taken away from his duties in that way. The Chairman of the Fisheries Board for Scotland had been taken away and the trawlers, both British and foreign, had been doing just as they liked. The House had a right to some explanation on that point. It was an undoubted fact that most Royal Commissions were appointed partly for the purpose of shelving questions and partly in order to find occupation for gentlemen who might otherwise get into mischief and to whom the fees they obtained came in very handy. He would remind the House that the money did not belong to the Government but to the people of the country, and it was not for the Government to expend it without good reason. That was, he knew, at difficult thing for Governments to appreciate. They were liberal in increasing salaries and in appointing Royal Commissioners, but in doing that they prevented the money being used for some useful purpose. Having regard to the pledges they had made he urged the Government not to allow money required for other purposes to be wasted on Royal Commissions. The Prime Minister had pledged himself and the Liberal Party "to colonise our own country" and he (Mr. Morton) claimed that some of this money should have been allotted to Sutherlandshire for piers, roads, and other means of communication to enable the people to earn a decent living and to prevent depopulation. He hoped the Government would give him the fullest information as to the Congested Districts (Ireland) Commission so that he could see for himself whether the money had been properly spent or not.

Mr. MOORE (Armagh, N.) said the question with which the Welsh Church Commission was appointed to deal was perhaps the most burning question in Wales at the present moment, and that being so he thought the House ought to be satisfied that the Commission was doing the work it was expected to do in a legal and legitimate way. His objection to the whole business was that, there being an acute question in Wales as regarded the Church, a Commission was appointed to consider it, and the whole weight of responsibility for arriving at a proper decision in the question was vested in a Lord Justice and the other Commissioners appointed with him. It would be a most unfortunate thing in the history of Commissions if what had been done in the case of the Welsh Church Commission were made a precedent for other Commissions. It was common knowledge that with regard to that Commission there had been a difference of opinion between the Chairman and some of his colleagues. The House would remember that under the terms of the Commission it was the Chairman and his colleagues who had to decide all matters of difference which arose within their competence. It would be a very unfortunate thing if any precedent were laid down that if a difference arose it should be submitted to arbitrators, however distinguished, and that they should assist the Commission to arrive at a conclusion which it was not only their right but their duty to do for themselves. He would say nothing against the distinguished gentlemen who had been brought in to advise the Commission inside its own jurisdiction. He would like to know however, if the subjects had been submitted to these eminent outsiders in their capacity as politicians or as lawyers? It seemed a very extraordinary thing that gentlemen not in the Commission and who had not heard the evidence should be brought in to advise the Commission as to the course they should take on the evidence. The President of the Board of Trade was a politician rather than a lawyer. The Commisison was appointed to report on the evidence brought before it, and if the President of the Board of Trade was necessary to enable them to arrive at those conclusions he should have been appointed a member of the Commission. If the Commissioners could not agree they should resign or by a majority decide what their proper course was. There was neither precedent nor principle of law to support them in calling in to their aid outsiders, however distinguished. Such action would certainly tend to rob the Report of a good deal of its importance, and lay it open to considerable attack, because it would at once be said that it was not the Report of the Commission. If the Government wanted to shelve the question they had taken the best course to that end, for he believed that a new Commission would have to be appointed. It was illegal and arbitrary procedure for the Commission to call in outsiders to advise them as to their course of conduct or to widen the scope of the inquiry in any shape or form. It was unfortunate that the two gentlemen concerned had been consulted, for that would certainly not make the Commissioners' Report more popular. If the matter went to a division he would oppose the Vote.

Sir ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorganshire, E.) said he sympathised with those hon. Members who were apprehensive that the Commission had been appointed in order to shelve the question of the Welsh Church. He did not understand that that was the object at all. It had been said that the Commission had been appointed to consider whether disestablishment was to take place or not. But the Welsh nation had settled that matter for themselves long ago. At the last general election every Welsh Member pledged himself to disestablishment. He believed that, as the Prime Minister had already declared, at the very earliest opportunity a measure was to be brought in on the question, whatever might be the findings of the Commission or whenever they might come to those findings. It would be a good deal better for hon. Members to allow the Commissioners to settle their business for themselves, and to call in whom they liked. The Commissioners were well able to manage their own affairs. For his own part he would have preferred that the terms of reference had not been so wide. No doubt it was necessary to have a Commission to make a report as to the temporalities of the Church and other matters. He trusted that the question would come up next year for final discussion and settlement.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.) wished in the first place for an explanation of a difference of about £9,000 in respect of the expenses of Commissions. The various Commissions named totalled £11,800, leaving nearly £9,000 unaccounted for. He thought that in the preparation of this particular item a little care might have been exercised to show what was the cost of the Commissions which, as stated in the explanatory note, were not "specifically provided for," especially when they were asked to vote so large a sum as £20,159, leaving altogether unexplained a balance of about £9,000. He thought the House should have some information as to the other Commissions which had been sitting, and as to how that large sum of money had been expended. There was an increase of £1,200 for the Poor Laws Commission. He asked whether that included the cost of the Poor Laws Commission in Ireland, and, if so, whether any information could be given as to how much of the total of £7,272 was for the Irish inquiry. It was a very large sum for an inquiry into a subject which was almost matter of common knowledge as far as Ireland was concerned, where there had been an almost absolute breakdown of the Poor Law. He hoped sincerely that the appointment of the Irish Commission did not mean that the matter was to be shelved indefinitely. He did not suppose that any of the Commissions was more important than the one which bore on the intricate and difficult matters of the Poor Law in Ireland. If this money was to be spent on Commissions and nothing was to be forthcoming in the future, it would be very unsatisfactory. The sums for Commissions in England and Ireland were lumped together, so that they could not ascertain what proportion of the expenditure was due to the inquiry in Ireland. They had nothing to show what real efforts had been made to inquire into the weakness of the system in that country. If only some £400 or £500 out of the £7,272 was to be put down to Ireland the House would readily grant that she had not been fairly treated in the matter. On the other hand, if half or one-third of the sum had been spent on the inquiry in Ireland, then at least the House would know that the Commission had had sufficient money to enable it to undertake duties most onerous but most necessary in the interests of the poor of that part of the Kingdom. With regard to £3,000 for the Commission on Congestion in Ireland, he asked whether the £3,000 might, judging from the wording of the estimate, amount to £12,000. The hon. Gentleman shook his head; therefore it might not amount to £12,000. If that was the case, he would ask him whether the cost of the South African Constitution Committee, which was understood to be about £4,000, might not be £13,000. He was only asking for information, for there was nothing in the explanatory note to show the House what the £9,000 was for. With regard to the sum put down for the Department of Agriculture, he thought it was simply a matter of book-keeping. If the whole of this £9,000 was spent it was fair to assume that it had gone on some other Commission not explained in the Vote. He was sorry that the Chief Secretary for Ireland was not present to answer these points. They were voting money for a Commission to inquire into the working of the Department of Agriculture in Ireland which had been permitted to carry on its operations under the *régime* of the previous Government, and that Commission had taken evidence all over Ireland. Its main object was to reform in some way the Board of Agriculture in Ireland. He thought it was only due to the House that some explanation should be given as to why the Commission was appointed and what the result of its deliberations was likely to be. He would like to know how much of the £1,800 was spent in the travelling expenses of the Commission in Ireland and how much of it went in other expenses. They all took a deep interest in the matter and he regretted that the Chief Secretary had not thought it necessary to be present in order to give the information he desired. [The Chief Secretary entered the House at this stage.] As the Chief Secretary had now taken his seat on the Treasury Bench he would have to amplify his remarks.

*MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. and gallant Member does that, I shall have to call his attention to the Standing Order which deals with repetition.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said he would not transgress the Speaker's ruling, but would leave it to his colleagues to repeat his points for the information of the Chief Secretary.

*MR. SPEAKER: That would also be out of order.

Captain CRAIG, in conclusion, said he hoped they would have a proper explanation of the expenditure to which he had referred.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): The hon. Member for North Armagh has made a serious charge against two Members of the Government and against a Lord Justice of Appeal. The hon. Member said that two Members of the Government attempted to interfere with the Royal Commission sitting in regard to the Welsh Church. His suggestion was that they were attempting to influence the members of the Commission in regard to the drawing up of their Report. It was an offensive reflection upon the learned and distinguished Judge at the head of the Commission that he should be open to any interference of that kind. The best answer I can give to the charge is that there is not a shadow of foundation for it from beginning to end. If I had not got up immediately and repudiated such a charge, not only on behalf of the Government, but also on behalf of one of the most high-minded and distinguished Judges in our Courts, I should have felt I was not doing my duty. There has been no interference at all. The matter has been purely one of procedure. If there was any attempt to interfere there is no man who would have repudiated it more strongly than Lord Justice Vaughan Williams. I cordially agree with what the hon. Member for East Glamorgan said. This is not a Commission to inquire into the question of disestablishment—that is a matter that we regard as settled as far as the Welsh people are concerned. You cannot have a Commission appointed to inquire into a political controversy—the Commission is inquiring into certain facts bearing upon that controversy. In every great question that comes to be settled in this House you can always refer to some official statistics, but in regard to this controversy you have not those figures. You have in regard to this controversy at present to depend upon rival figures supplied by partisans on both sides. One set of partisans would say that the Church represented one-half of the population and others that they represent only one-third or one-fourth. You have, therefore, nothing to which you can refer, and this Commission has been appointed purely to inquire into figures of that kind which can be proved upon evidence of witnesses under cross-examination.

*Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said he understood that this Vote included the expenses of the Viceregal Commission on the Irish Poor Law, whose Report had recently been issued. He would like to know if there was any possibility of a visit being paid to Ireland by the Royal Commission which was now considering the state of the Poor Law in Great Britain. He would strongly deprecate such a step. The Viceregal Commission had made a very careful survey of the conditions peculiar to Ireland, and he thought their Report had met with the general approval of all persons who were really conversant with the problem of Irish Poor Law administration. There was a very strong feeling in Ireland that the Government should as soon as possible give effect to the Report of the Viceregal Commission, and he did not think it was either necessary or desirable that the Royal Commission should attempt, during a necessarily brief visit to Ireland, to go over the same ground.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury) said he could not refer to the policy of the Irish Government on this Vote, but his hon. friend might take it that what he had said in regard to the Royal Commission would not be overlooked by the Chief Secretary. The hon. Member for South Antrim was anxious to know where the money had gone to, but if he would read the note at the foot of the Estimate he would get all the information he required. There had been a large number of Commissions sitting during the last twelve months, and the various items were mentioned in the Note. The control of the Treasury over Royal Commissions was very slight, but in so far as they could control their expenditure the Treasury did so. They kept down their travelling and secretarial expenses as far as possible, and there was nothing which was not already covered by the particulars given in the original Estimate. The hon. Member for North Armagh was anxious that the Government should in no way allow Royal Commissions to call in outsiders in the process of their deliberations; but that was the proper business of Royal Commissions. They could call in and accept evidence from whom they liked. It was very desirable that in that respect Royal Commissions should act independently of the Executive Government, and their Report would be of no value whatever if the Government controlled their deliberations after they had been appointed. The hon. Member for Sutherland wished to know how the money spent on Royal Commissions in Ireland had gone. Up to the 31st of January £388 8s. 11d. was spent in salaries, not one penny of which had gone to the Commissioners. The sum of £1,145 went in travelling expenses in Ireland, travelling being no cheaper there than in this country; £4 odd for incidental expenses, and £473 for shorthand notes. Of the whole expenditure of the Congestion in Ireland Commission not one single penny had gone to the members of the Commission, and none of the Royal Commissioners appointed by the Government had received any remuneration for their services. The Commission hoped to conclude their labours about September, 1907. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London had asked a question about the Feeble-minded Commission. That was not a matter which concerned the Treasury. It was appropriate in part to the Local Government Board and in part in the Home Office. The Commission was originally set up by the late Government, who, before they went out of office, extended the reference so as to include an inquiry, not only into the care of the feeble-minded, but also into the treatment of idiots and epileptics. If the hon. Gentleman would refer to *Vacher* he would find that the Commissioners were asked—

> "To consider the existing methods of dealing with idiots and epileptics, and with imbecile, feeble-minded or defective persons not certified under the Lunacy Laws; and in view of the hardships or danger resulting to such persons and the community from insufficient provision for their care, training and control, to report as to the Amendments in the law or other measures which should be adopted in the matter, due regard being had to the expense involved in any such proposals and to the best means of securing economy therein; and to inquire into the constitution, jurisdiction, and working of the Commission in Lunacy and of other lunacy authorities in England and Wales, and into the expediency of amending the same or adopting some other system of supervising the care of lunatics and mental defectives, and of reporting as to any amendments in the law which should, in their opinion, be adopted."

Those were matters in which not only the Home Office, but the Local Government Board was concerned. The work the Commissioners were doing was of the very first order. He was afraid he could not without notice give the hon. Member the information he had asked for in regard to the total amount expended by the Commission, but he would get it for him if he wished. The medical investigations had gone over a wider area than was at first anticipated. Many of the chief centres of population throughout England and Scotland had been visited, and he was told that in every place information of the highest value had been gathered. That explained why it had been necessary to come for a Supplementary Estimate. As to the Poor Laws Commission, he was informed that investigations were being made with the sanction of the Treasury into the Poor Laws not only of England, but of one or two foreign countries, where the question of pauperism was being inquired into in relation to such matters as insanitary conditions, the effects of dangerous trades, out-door relief and unemployment—matters of the highest importance not only to the Local Government Board, but to local authorities.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): I think the Commissioners who are inquiring into the condition of the feeble-minded have done good work, and I do not grumble at the extra expenditure, because I know that a great part of the work depends for its efficiency on the officers who carry it out. I think the extension of the terms of reference was not done by the late Government. It was effected by my successor, the present Home Secretary. I have nothing to say against that extension. The Commission has been extremely useful, and I think the right hon. Gentleman did well to extend the reference so as to include an inquiry into the Lunacy Commission. I think the extra expenditure has been occasioned by a different class of experts being required to do the work.

MR. DILLON asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

SIR F. BANBURY moved to reduce the Vote by £100.

MR. T. L. CORBETT seconded the Amendment.

MR. RUNCIMAN: On a point of order, may I ask if the hon. Member for the City of London has not already addressed the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: He spoke on the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£10,000,' and insert '£9,900.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question put, "That '£10,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

The House divided:—Ayes, 331; Noes, 81. (Division List No. 41.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hon. HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A.(Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke,Stopford
Brunner,J. F. L. (Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,Rt.Hn.SirJT(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt. Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clarke, C. Goddard
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Coats,Sir T.Glen (Renfrew, W.)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cogan, Denis J.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir WmJ.(S.Pancras,W.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St. Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duffy, William J.
Duncan,C.(Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunn, Major E.Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Frank (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Ginnell, L.
Gladstone,Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.

Mr. Akers-Douglas.

Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire,Wirral)
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(FalkirkB'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal,E.
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Crae, George
M‘Hugh, Patrick A.
M‘Kean, John
M‘Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M‘Killop, W.
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M‘Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meehan, Patrick A.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James(Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon,
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paul, Herbert
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price,Robert John (Norfolk, E.
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards, Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton-und.-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F.(Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, SirA.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivan, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Sir John L.(Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W.Dudley (S'thampton)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, JohnCathcart(Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Whitbread, Howard
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon.C.H.W.(Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, RtHn.A.J.(City Lond)
Banner, John S.Harmood-
Baring, Hon. Guy (Winchester)
Barrie, H.T.(Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Brace, William
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. VictorC.W.

Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A.(Worc
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings,Rt. Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, SirFredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark,Gov'n
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fletcher, J. S.
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hervey,F.W.F.(BuryS.Edm'ds
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kennaway, Rt.Hn. SirJohn H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt.Hn.Col.W.
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Liddell, Henry
Lockwood,Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A. R.
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttleton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
Middlemore, JohnThrogmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Nicholson, Wm.G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, HerbertPike(Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, SirBerkeleyGeorgeD.
Smith, AbelH.(Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson,W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley(York,E.R.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon.C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir F. Banbury and Mr. T. L. Corbett.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [21ST FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1906–7.

CLASS I.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,900, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for Houses of Parliament Buildings."

CLASS II.

3. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,550, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and Expenses in the Offices of the House of Commons."

4. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £255, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Offices of the Chief Secretary in Dublin and London, and Expenses under the Inebriates Acts."

CLASS III.

5. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for such of the Salaries and Expenses of the Supreme Court of Judicature as are not charged on the Consolidated Fund."

6. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £140, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Establishment of the Crofters' Commission."

CLASS IV.

7. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for Grants towards the Expenditure of certain School Boards in Scotland."

First Resolution read a second time.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said he wanted to ask a Question of the First Commissioner of Works as to the cutting of the elms in Kensington Gardens.

*MR. SPEAKER said that that did not arise on this Vote.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said that there was on this Vote an increase of £300 for the wages of gangers and labourers in the Royal parks and pleasure gardens. Was that increase to be temporary or permanent; and how many persons were affected by it? In order to obtain that information he moved the reduction of the Vote by £100. He had found that the conditions of labour and the pay of the gangers and labourers in the Royal parks and gardens were not satisfactory. What was considered a fair wage a few years ago was not sufficient now; and he hoped that the First Commissioner of Works would make it clear that the wages of the men he had referred to would be brought up to the proper standard, and that any increase which might be given under this Vote to other employees would be extended to the gangers and labourers in the Royal parks and pleasure gardens.

Sir F. BANBURY said he wished to second the Motion, but not for the reasons propounded by the hon. Member who moved it. He believed that the wages of the gangers and labourers in the Royal parks and pleasure gardens were as good as they should be; but what he wanted to ask the First Commissioner of Works or the Secretary to the Treasury whether any information could be given to the House as to what further cost to the country would be involved by the rise in the wages in this and other departments.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£2,300,' and insert '£2,200.'"—(*Mr. Claude-Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That '£2,300' stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. T. L. CORBETT inquired the wages which were actually paid to the gangers and labourers in the parks in question.

*The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) said he had answered this Question on the Committee stage of the Vote. He was then attacked by the hon. Member for the City who thought he had paid too high wages, and who blamed him for following the London County Council as a model. He was now attacked by the hon. Member for Hoxton for not paying the men enough. He thought he could set the mind of the hon. Member at rest by assuring him that this was a permanent increase. The total increase would, moreover, be slightly greater for the year than appeared on the Paper, because the Supplementary Estimate was only for nine months. The total number of the men was 448, of which number 300 were labourers, and the rest were gangers or other men of that class. He was asked whether it would lead to increased wages in other parks. He was communicating with the Board of Agriculture and with the Treasury in order that the increase might take place in other parks concurrently with that which he had named. Kew was not now under his jurisdiction, but under the Board of Agriculture. The exact amount of wages paid was for labourers in London 27s. a week, and in the country 23s. a week. He could not bear in his head the exact number of hours worked.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY said that after the explanation which the right hon. Gentleman had given he would ask leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Sir F. BANBURY questioned the First Commissioner about the ventilation of the House of Commons. He had asked him about the subject in Committee, but he did not think that since that time the ventilation had been improved. He made no complaint about the Lobbies, but in the House itself they still felt exceedingly cold about their feet and legs, and he had on many occasions noticed a disagreeable smell on entering the Chamber. That was because it was heated by hot air, and there was an exhausting kind of smell which resulted from that kind of heating. He asked whether when the weather got warmer the right hon. Gentleman would not make some alteration in the system of ventilation and have the windows open.

The right hon. Gentleman on the former occasion explained that under the present system it would be difficult to have the windows open because of the working of the large exhaust fans in the roof. Those fans, however, could be stopped, and many of them thought that the results would be good and pleasant. At all events, even if they were wrong there would be no harm in making the experiment. To do so, indeed, might save money now spent upon working the electric fans. He also inquired why the Patronage Secretary had been given another room downstairs. Why should that right hon. Gentleman require two rooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. Was the latter chosen as a stronghold against suffragettes and Labour Members?

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said he had had great experience of crowded halls, and never in his life had he been in a place where the ventilation was so excellent as in the House of Commons. He did not notice any nasty, stuffy smell, and he had noticed it in other buildings heated by hot air. He sympathised with the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London when he spoke of cold draughts about his feet and legs, but he admitted the difficulty of having a perfectly satisfactory system of ventilation. He had a little solution to offer which would, he thought, meet the convenience of every Member of the House. Under the present system one man was nearly boiled while another man was nearly frozen. He suggested that a little electrical heating apparatus should be supplied for the feet of hon. Members, which could be switched on or off at pleasure. In order to prevent undue heating of the House owing to the forgetfulness of hon. Members to switch the apparatus off, it might be automatically switched off every half hour, and then those Members who wanted warmth could switch it on again. Members would in that way be able to get all the heat they wanted; and another advantage was that the Government would be enabled to find out where the warm Members were. The cost would be trifling, and apart from the wire the apparatus would cost £2.

Colonel LOCKWOOD hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not interfere any more with the ventilation of the House. It was impossible to find a place in which the ventilation was better than the House of Commons. In the nature of things there must be draughts, and it was impossible to satisfy everybody, but he thought the warmth of the House was sufficient for any decent warm-blooded man.

*Mr. HARCOURT said he belonged to the class which suffered from cold, but he was bound to see that a proper flow of air was kept up in order to maintain an even temperature. He was afraid, however, that he did occasionally take a liberty with the health of hon. Members by decreasing the flow of air, and that while he made them comfortable he might be contributing to the causes which brought about ill health. But the matter was a very difficult one to deal with Within five minutes of his receiving a complaint that it was too cold from one side he got a complaint that it was too hot from the other. He was therefore really between Members and the deep sea. It was impossible to please them all, but he was endeavouring to diminish the supply of air on the Opposition benches, and for the comfort of hon. Members who had complained he was having placed there temporary gauze screens, so that the flow of air would be less during the cold weather, while the screens could be removed during hot weather. He heard with great alarm the proposal that they should cut off the action of the fans in the roof and open the windows during the warm weather, because if that were done the result would be that there would be no air in the House. He could not consent to try so unhealthy and unpleasant an experiment while the House was sitting, but if for purposes of experiment the hon. Baronet would, with himself, sit there after the House had risen, he would stand the strain for as many hours as he could or for so long as the hon. Baronet desired to continue the experience. He did not think he could venture upon the experiment of electric heaters, even though it would enable the Government to know where the popular seats were. As to the extra room given to the Patronage Secretary, a few months ago a small scullery was found insufficient for the staff of the sergeant-at-arms and he had given them better accommodation. That scullery, which was not good enough for them, had now been given to his colleague, who was a very hard-worked official, and entitled to a little rest and comfort. He did not think he had exceeded the general wishes of the House in giving his colleague a small room.

Resolution agreed to.

Third Resolution read a second time.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he would move to reduce the Vote by £100 in order to ask the Financial Secretary to the Treasury a question which he had already asked in Committee, but which the hon. Gentleman had not answered. He wished to ask what amount was paid to the messengers who delivered the Votes and Proceedings of the House at Members' residences. He was also anxious to know how the work was distributed and the conditions under which the work was done—whether each man covered the same distance and carried the same weight. The hon. Gentleman on the last occasion was unable to give the figures, but thought the messengers were paid £150 a year. He (Mr. Hay) had, however, ascertained that they were paid from 12s. to 17s. a week according to length of service for work which took them from seven in the morning until twelve. He wished to know why the men were not on the establishment.

*MR. SPEAKER said that none of these questions arose on this Vote, which was a Vote arising out of the expense of the autumn sittings.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said in that case he would not pursue the subject further, but would ask the hon. Gentleman to inform the House what was the exact amount for the distribution of the Votes and Proceedings during the autumn sittings.

MR. RUNCIMAN said he was not very well informed on the last occasion, but the hon. Gentleman would find detailed information as to the employment of the men in question on page 46 of the Report of the Select Committee on Official Publications, issued last year. The men were paid from 12s. to 17s. a week, according to the work they did. Some of them worked about the House in various capacities, and they were exceedingly well paid for the work they did. The work in the autumn sittings was equally distributed, as it was every session.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.) said the hon. Gentleman had made a reference to the Select Committee on Official Publications which sat last year. He would like to ask whether any of the recommendations of that Committee would be put into force. On the Committee stage he also asked a question with regard to the payment of witnesses' expenses. He urged the importance of seeing whether anything could be done so to arrange Committee work that the attendance of witnesses from distant parts was not prolonged more than was necessary. Very often large panels were referred to the same Committee and many witnesses were detained for a long time before the Bill or case in which they were interested came on. Seeing that they were confronted with a large Supplementary Estimate on the point he thought the subject was one which ought to occupy the attention of the Government. He could not help thinking that in some cases the witnesses were called upon earlier than was necessary.

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution read a second time.

SIR F. BANBURY, in moving a reduction of £200, said that when the Vote came before the Committee the Chief Secretary was asked to explain this item, and the House would agree that the explanations of the right hon. Gentleman were not very satisfactory. The autumn sittings lasted two months, and seeing that a first-class return ticket to Ireland was about £4 14s., it seemed remarkable that the Chief Secretary and his Under-Secretary should have spent £200 in two months in travelling. The item demanded some serious consideration. The right hon. Gentleman received a salary of £4,500. Why was he not content with that? He gathered on the last occasion that the right hon. Gentleman had none of the money included in the Vote under discussion. If that were so, why was it put upon the Estimates in that form? He did not know that Ministers had their expenses from their residence to the House. He would have thought they ought to pay that expense themselves. Then with regard to the payment made to the St. Patrick's Inebriate Asylum. It might be an excellent institution, but that was no reason why the House should provide £55 towards its maintenance. He understood that the Chief Secretary was bound by Act of Parliament to give that sum, and the right hon. Gentleman had explained that other homes received sums in the same way. It was, he thought, impossible to defend a policy by which the taxpayers became charitable subscribers to such institutions. He hoped there would be some satisfactory explanation forthcoming.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£255,' and insert '£55.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That '£255,' stand part of the said Resolution."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, (Bristol, N.) said he was quite willing to give an explanation, and, as practice made perfect, perhaps he would be able to explain the matter more lucidly than he did on a former occasion. He had pointed out that the note at the foot of the Estimate contained a misprint, and that the expenses referred to were not those of the Chief Secretary at all, but of the Under-Secretary. The Chief Secretary did not get those travelling expenses; and he agreed with the hon. Baronet that it would be a most improper thing if he did do so. The Chief Secretary made the journeys between London and Dublin, agreeable or disagreeable, entirely at his own charge. The travelling expenses connected with the Chief Secretary's name were for his journeys through Ireland when investigating the social condition of the country, and seeking to make himself acquainted with such questions as would engage the attention of the House, namely, the fishing and other industries in Ireland. He believed it had been the practice to allow some grant in respect of that expenditure. So far as he was himself concerned, having had no experience, he was bound to say that the result of the investigations made by the Chief Secretary was very puzzling for those who succeeded to the office, because he noticed that in regard to every kind of expenditure in the way of piers, harbours and other works, many promises were made which it was often very difficult to fulfil. But they were the only travelling expenses for which the Chief Secretary was entitled to make a claim. The travelling expenses were incurred by the Under-Secretary and his private secretary in travelling between London and Dublin, and owing to the autumn sittings, and the activity of proceedings in the Irish Office during that time, the Estimate had been exceeded, and a Supplementary Estimate had become necessary. The Under-Secretary was also entitled to a guinea a day subsistence money when in London, besides his travelling expenses. With regard to the inebriate homes, he was sorry he had not made himself plain to the hon. Baronet on that point. He had given him the reference to the Act, which was 61 & 62 Vict., c. 60, and under that enactment the obligation was imposed upon the Treasury not only in Ireland, but in England and Scotland, to make grants for the maintenance of inebriates who were sent to homes of that description. To speak of it as a voluntary and charitable donation on the part of the Irish Government to the St. Patrick's Home at Waterford only showed the misconception in the hon. Baronet's mind as to the motives which animated the Irish Office. At the time the Estimates were made the Waterford inebriates' home was not in existence, and the demand was subsequent to their preparation. They had no option in the matter; it was an obligation imposed by Parliament, and the only way of dealing with it was to put it in the Chief Secretary's Vote. In the forthcoming year's Estimates it would find a sub-head of its own, where it would engage the attention of hon. Members again.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many inebriate homes are there in Ireland?

MR. BIRRELL: There is St. Patrick's Home at Waterford, and there is the Reformatory Home for the detention of habitual drunkards, which is under the Prisons Board, and comes under the prisons rate. The Waterford home, to which the Treasury contributes, is the only one of that character established in Ireland, so far.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said the speech of the Chief Secretary had made more difficult to understand than before this expenditure of £200 during the autumn sittings. He said that the Chief Secretary's share of the £200 was for his peregrinations through Ireland. In the ordinary course of events, when there was no autumn sitting, the Chief Secretary would be travelling about Ireland, and the amount for travelling could then be understood, but in the autumn sittings he was present in the House ready to answer the numerous questions put to him by hon. Members below the gangway. The explanation of the right hon. Gentleman was not satisfactory, and he thought they were entitled to know whether the £200 really included any of the expenses of the Chief Secretary at all, or whether it was not entirely a mistake to attribute it to the autumn sittings.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said it was a remarkable thing that the Member for the City of London, familiar with commercial life, and in whose constituency every business man allowed his representatives their travelling expenses, should say that the Chief Secretary, in receipt of a salary for the important duties which he discharged, should not be paid his expenses when travelling on the business of the country. He disagreed with the right hon. Gentleman when he said that it would not be proper to charge his travelling expenses between London and Dublin. He thought it would be very proper, and he believed the House would be perfectly willing that the Chief Secretary should have a season ticket between London and Dublin, just as it would be given by any industrial company. Indeed, it would be to the interest of the country if season tickets were issued to all officials who travelled frequently.

LORD BALCARRES said the hon. Member was quite mistaken if he thought that their objection was solely to the travelling expenses put down. Their objection was that it was only by means of a Supplementary Estimate that they knew at all that the Chief Secretary was allowed travelling expenses in Ireland. The fact was concealed in the Vote, and for aught he or the hon. Member for Mansfield knew every other Minister with a Department outside London might have travelling expenses allowed to him. [" No."] Well, there was nothing in the Estimates to show whether they had or had not. He dared say the expenses allowed to the Chief Secretary for travelling in Ireland was a very proper thing; he was not there to oppose it; but he had risen to protest against the assumption of the hon. Member that these things were known. They ought to be clearly set forth in the Estimates, and he was extremely glad the discussion had taken place. He hoped that when further Estimates were prepared for the right hon. Gentleman's Department they would clearly show the travelling expenses and to what and to whom they were devoted

*MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) said he did not know that they had any title to complain of this waste of time by hon. Members opposite, seeing that an arrangement had been made in regard to what Votes were to be got; but with all respect to hon. Gentlemen opposite, he must say that on the Ministerial side of the House they felt strongly in regard to the matters raised by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London being again brought forward after having been fully answered in Committee by the Chief Secretary. It seemed to him that it was wasting the time of the House. The travelling expenses of the Chief Secretary were about the best form of expenditure they could have, because the more he travelled about Ireland the better it would be for the government of that country. It was to the advantage of Ireland that the Chief Secretary should be intimately acquainted with every part of Ireland, and he was sure that the House would never grudge the small sum spent upon travelling expenses. The complaint in regard to the sum granted to the Inebriates Home was ridiculous, and he wished to protest against the waste of time in this respect because it was becoming habitual. The Government could not refuse this grant as it was made under the Statute, and therefore it was a waste of time to discuss it at all.

*MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing) said the Chief Secretary had informed the House that some portion of this expense had been incurred by himself and the Under-Secretaries going up and down the country by motor car and on board a fishing vessel in order to make themselves acquainted with the condition of the country, an expense which would not for a moment be criticised as unnecessary since the object of it was one much to be desired. A little more light had been thrown upon the subject, and it appeared that the Chief Secretary, according to the statement he had just made to the House, had been induced by the condition of things he saw to make many promises which he [admitted he found it was very difficult to fulfil. The House and the country generally were anxious that the Chief Secretary should not make such promises, because not only the right hon. Gentleman, but his colleagues in the Government and the Radical Party as a whole had made far too many promises of that character in the past—promises which he and they must have known perfectly well they could not redeem and which could only have been made to catch the votes of a credulous electorate. It was these promises which had in the main resulted in the abnormal majority of which the Government boasted in that House. These electoral promises had proved very disastrous to the country as a whole in the past and ought not to be repeated.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Subsequent Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [6TH MARCH] REPORT.

Resolution reported.

ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATE, 1906–7.

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army services, viz. :—

	£
Vote 5. Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowances, etc. - -	439,000
Vote 12. Miscellaneous Effective Services - - -	20,000
	459,000
Less Surpluses on other Votes - - -	458,900
	100 "

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

SIR F. BANBURY said he wished to move a reduction of £10.

*MR. SPEAKER : I do not think there can be any reduction moved below £100. The proper course for the hon. Baronet to pursue is to object to the Motion. The Question is : "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

SIR F. BANBURY said that when the Vote was discussed in Committee a question was raised with regard to the loan to Volunteers for drill halls and ranges. It was then pointed out that the result of the transfer of this £439,000 would be that that amount, which in the ordinary course would go to the reduction of the National Debt, would not do so. [Cries of "Divide."] This was an extremely important question, and he did not understand why the hon. Member for the Appleby Division should be so much annoyed when they attempted to discuss proposals of this kind.

*MR. LEIF JONES : On the contrary, I think it very proper to discuss proposals of this character.

SIR F. BANBURY said that if the Vote were not carried the £439,000 would go to the reduction of the Debt. The Secretary for War had told them that they were in error in supposing that the £439,000 would be diverted from paying off Debt, because, he said, it was going to be used to pay off debt by the Public Works Loans Commissioners. If the Vote were not carried, not only would the National Debt Commissioners be able to apply the £439,000 to the instant reduction of Debt, but they would in the course of the next few years pay off an additional £439,000 advanced by the Public Works Loans Commissioners. If the Secretary for War had wished to preserve the same balance he should have made provision in the Vote that the £28,000 under the capitation grant should go not to the Army, but to the National Debt Commissioners. Then he would have preserved the natural sequence of events. He did not say that the Volunteers ought not to derive any benefit, but several hon. Members connected with the Volunteers had said that they did not wish the War Office to be substituted for the Public Works Loans Commissioners. He raised the question purely as a financial matter, because it seemed to him that it was a serious step to take. It was quite evident that the Secretary of State for War had made the proposal without quite knowing what he was doing.

Mr. HALDANE dissented.

Sir F. BANBURY said he was sorry to see the right hon. Gentleman shake his head, because he was certainly going to take over a sum of money which ought to appear in the Army Estimates next year. The right hon. Gentleman was anxious to take this money to benefit his own Department, and apparently to prevent the Army Estimates next year being unduly swollen. From a financial point of view, it was a serious step to abolish the old Sinking Fund. If any Department was allowed, in order to avoid coming to the House with another Estimate in the forthcoming year, to take surpluses which should go to the reduction of Debt, a very serious blow would be inflicted upon the financial system of the country. If such a procedure were sanctioned it would be possible for Ministers to represent their Estimates as being more moderate than was really the case. It was presenting an inaccurate report to the nation of the expenditure upon the Army, and he was surprised at a Government supposed to be purists in finance establishing such a precedent. If the Financial Secretary to the War Office had been in Opposition it would have been almost impossible to hold him in his seat had such a proposal been made by a Conservative Government.

*Mr. GEORGE FABER said the right hon. Gentleman had in this matter done, quite unintentionally no doubt, what he had no right to do. The sum in question was a natural surplus which ought to have gone to the old Sinking Fund established by 38 & 39 Vict. That was his first objection to the proposal. His second objection was that the War Office proposed practically to take a transfer of a mortgage which was at present held by the Public Works Loans Commissioners. What power had the War Office to engage in a transaction of that kind? He had looked through all the statutes, and he could not find that the War Office had any power to do so. His third objection was that the Public Works Loans Commissioners had no power to make a transfer of the mortgage. It was an irregular transaction from beginning to end. With the £450,000 odd surplus which ought to go to the Sinking Fund, the War Office was taking a transfer of a mortgage on Volunteer Drill Halls from the Public Works Loans Commissioners. That sum, which otherwise would have been repaid to the Commissioners in due course by the mortgagors, would be lost to the Sinking Fund, because the right hon. Gentleman contemplated writing off the debt. He purposed holding out as an inducement to the Volunteers that if they came into his scheme they would be let off the payment of this money.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said the present were not times in which they could take anything from the Sinking Fund. Consols were at a price only a quarter or a half different from that which they reached in the depth of the War. Surely the holders of Consols and large investors in trust funds had a right to expect that money saved each year on the Estimates would be applied to the redemption of Consols. That would, of course, naturally tend to raise the market for them, making the securities more saleable, and thereby the credit of the country would be increased. Last spring the House voted a certain number of men for the Army, and it was afterwards decided that the number should be considerably reduced. That meant a considerable reduction in the amount of money required. They might have expected that the amount so saved would have been applied to the Sinking Fund, but Members on both sides of the House learned with much surprise the other day that it was to be employed by the War Office in the purchase of a mortgage. His hon. friend the Member for York had raised a question as to the legality of the transaction. If the Government could do as they proposed to do in the present case, then farewell to the Sinking Fund as it was now understood. He could not suppose that the powers of the various departments included power to juggle with the finances of the country in the way proposed by this Vote.

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, further proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

MARINE WORKS IN IRELAND.

Mr. MOONEY rose to call attention to the question of marine works in Ireland; and to move, "That, in the opinion of this House, the sea fisheries of Ireland stand in urgent need of development with a view to the employment of the people and to stem the tide of emigration; and that the proper development of these fisheries and the subsidiary industries dependent upon them can only be attained by the speedy passing of a Marine Works Act similar to the Act already passed (but largely in abeyance) in connection with the congested districts, but modified to suit the circumstances of the other parts of the country." He said that the terms of the Resolution were such as he should think would commend themselves to every Member of the House, and certainly to every Irish Member no matter to what Party he belonged. He did not intend to deal with the statistics of emigration; it was sufficient for him to say that, in spite of the birth rate, which was largely in excess of the death rate, the population of Ireland was steadily diminishing, in curious contrast to Great Britain where the population was increasing. The Report as to emigration from Ireland which was laid every month on the Table of the House showed appalling figures, but they did not exhibit the whole facts. Every Irishman must deplore that the people who are leaving Ireland year by year were healthy, strong, and vigorous — the very people who should form the backbone of the country; while those who were left were the very young or the very old. Many explanations of that fact had been given, but in his opinion the reason was that the system of government in Ireland had tended to kill native industries, with the result that the young and vigorous people could not find employment in their own country and had to seek it in other lands. Let them take the fishing industry. The demand for the products of the harvest of the ocean was increasing in every country in the world. The Irish seas teemed with fish, and the fishing industry ought to be a source of great natural income. That had been proved in the western districts, where the Marine Works Act had been in operation, and where, with the aid given to the fishermen under that Act, the catch of fish had in many cases been doubled and even trebled. The Marine Works Act had, however, only been applied to a very limited area; and nothing had been done for the fishermen in the north, east, and south coast, who had consequently suffered considerable disadvantage. He knew the east coast intimately, and he would show that the Government Departments, instead of encouraging the fishing industry there, had by their action tended to kill it. Under various Acts of Parliament the control of the Irish fisheries had passed into the hands of two different bodies, the Irish Board of Works and the Irish Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, both of which had failed to carry out the duty imposed upon them, and had strangled the fishing industry. Wherever the Irish Board of Works had built a harbour they had ruined the anchorage. That was especially the case at Greystones, in the county of Wicklow. Many years ago, when he lived there, there was a fleet of fishing boats, each of which employed five hands, and from the money the fishermen obtained from the sale of their catch of fish they were able to support 200 families. There was a small pier which afforded certain protection to the fishing boats, but in an evil hour an official of the Irish Board of Works arrived on the scene and said that the Board would build a new harbour for the fishermen. The local fishermen warned him that he would have to be very careful in building the harbour, as there were very curious currents and sets of the tide there. The Board of Works, which consisted of Englishmen who had never lived in Ireland, refused to listen to the local fishermen and local authorities, and built the harbour. The result was, as everybody in the locality had prophesied, that the harbour now resembled the ruins of a bombarded city. The currents and set of the tide had been changed in such a manner that at the present moment Greystones Harbour was filled with silt and sand; one half of the harbour works had fallen into the sea and the other half was following it He would suggest to the Chief Secretary that, in his capacity as President of the Irish Board of Works, he should transfer the extraordinary engineering ability of that Board to the Royal Commission now sitting on the erosion of the sea coast in Ireland, because no erosion ever took place in any harbour which the Board built. For instance, Wicklow Harbour, which was built out of public funds, was built by the Board of Works against the advice of the people of the locality, who advised the Board of Works that the particular design which had been drawn up was not suitable for the locality. The result was that the fishery of Wicklow, at one time a flourishing industry, was now languishing. A Wicklow fisherman at the present time, if he happened to be outside the harbour when a storm came on, could not get into the harbour, and if he was inside the harbour when the storm broke he could not get out. Only quite recently a few boats were out fishing when a storm came, and, instead of being able to get into their own harbour, the fishermen had to run up to Kingstown, which was thirty miles off, to get shelter. That came about because the officials of the Board of Works went down to a locality and said, "We are the Board of Works; you"—the people of the locality—"are only local nobodies, and we are going to do as we like." If, however, there was a case of glaring blundering, it was the case of Arklow. There again the Board of Works came down and built a harbour and set all local knowledge on one side. Arklow was at one time a very flourishing town, with a large fishing industry, and efforts were being made to improve its trade by starting new industries. There were at least two large industries started, which, if this Department had done its work properly, would have made the place prosperous instead of the reverse, and compelling the people to go to America in order to earn a living. There was started outside the town of Arklow a quarry known as the Parnell Quarry; the famous Birmingham firm of Kynochs went over and built great works, and it was essential for the success of those undertakings that they should have facilities for carrying away by sea the product of their capital and labour. But the Board of Works, with their usual method of disregarding local opinion, built the harbour, with the result that a bar had formed at the mouth of it and the harbour was rapidly silting up, so that one could not get a boat of more than 10 feet draft in or out of it. In consequence of that state of things a short time ago the Parnell Quarry had to be shut down, and the proprietors discharged the greater part of the local workmen. That meant a loss of a £140 per week in wages to the workmen of the town. Kynochs also had discharged a very large number of their men which, meant the loss of something like £400 a week which otherwise would have been spent in the town. When the question of the harbour was brought up before the managers of Messrs. Kynoch, they said that if the bar continued they would be obliged to shut up the works completely, clear out of Arklow, and build elsewhere. If that policy had been pursued in any town in England the English Board would at once have sent down fully qualified engineers, not people who did not know anything about the work, but those who understood it, and would have seen that the harbour was instantly put into such a condition that the trade and prosperity of the place should not suffer. But that was not all. Although the people of Arklow had protested against the building of the harbour they had to pay the interest upon the money which it cost to construct. The Permanent Under-Secretary for Ireland, addressing the Society of Civil Engineers of Ireland, said there was in that country great opportunity for engineering enterprise. They had constant complaints that their harbours were silting up and that powers were wanted to improve them. Of course they had financial difficulties to contend with, but if they had only £3,000,000 they could convert Ireland into a district in which no water-logging would be any longer possible. All he could say was that there would be no water-logging if the Board of Works were allowed to have their way, because under their policy they would reclaim land and kill the industry of the sea. The next Department they had to deal with was the Irish Board of Agriculture. It might seem strange that the Board of Agriculture should deal with fisheries. But a portion of the Fishery Grant was administered by that Board. The policy of that Board as regarded fisheries was hard to understand or rather it was hard to find. They had all along read their Act of Parliament in such a way that, instead of spending money which the House voted them annually in the year in which it was voted, they had set themselves to build up a funded income on which they could rely and be independent of Parliament. The result was that when anyone went to them for any money they got a stereotyped reply, "We have no money," and yet, if one turned to their annual Report, it would be seen that the Department was piling up a sum of money which at the present day amounted to nearly half a million. It was very difficult to say, however, what the precise sum was, because Mr. Bryce contradicted the figures in the Board's own Report, and told him that the figures that he gave were given on the authority of the Board. He supposed the Board had the idea of some day coming before them with a dazzling scheme for helping the fishing industry, but it seemed to him that by the time they produced it there would be no fishing industry to help. That, however, did not appear to concern the red tape gentlemen in Merrion Street. A great deal of the difficulty and trouble which had arisen in Ireland was largely the creation of lawyers and of gentlemen who sat in Government offices and tried by means of red tape to tangle up every Bill passed for the benefit of Ireland. The moment a Bill was passed for the benefit of Ireland some legal gentleman stepped in and said that under some Bill which had been passed fifty years ago, which nobody had ever heard of, although they were ready to give them money they found they could not do so. To meet the condition of things to which he had been referring a small amending Bill should be brought in which he was sure would receive the support of all the Irish Members, although it might be met with violent opposition by the Irish Board of Works. He begged to move.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.) seconded the Motion, and said that in doing so he could not suppress the idea that was uppermost in his mind, namely, that many hon. and right hon. Gentlemen belonging to this country usually associated everything an Irish Member said in the House with politics, and hence they frequently talked to empty benches and were at a very great disadvantage in placing their grievances before the House. The subject of marine works, including fisheries, was one of the most important of Irish questions. Ireland had considerably over 2,000 miles of coast line. Her fisheries were amongst the most extensive, important, and remunerative in the world, and yet she had only a little over 6,000 vessels engaged in fishing, and that small number was on the decrease, as well as the fishermen. There were thirty-one vessels and 123 fishermen less in 1905 than in 1904. He did not know whether there had been a further decrease in 1906, as the Report for that year had not yet been issued, but he did know that the Motion of his hon. friend the Member for South Kerry—

> "Resolved that the condition of the Irish Fisheries is unsatistactory and demands the attention of the Government,"

was passed unanimously by the House in March last year, and yet he thought they found themselves in pretty much the same position still. The Reports for 1905 showed the disparity in value between the Scottish and Irish take of fish. It was, in round numbers, about £2,245,000 in favour of the Scottish. Mr. W. S. Green, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, told the Congested Districts Commission that that difference was not to be accounted for by the movements of fish around our coasts, but to Scotland's better facilities in the shape of piers and harbours; and he might have added, to Scotland's better equipment in large fishing vessels and steam trawlers, because they found by the same Report that 439 Scottish vessels were engaged in the Irish herring fishery and netted fish to the value of nearly £31,000, whilst only one Irish vessel visited the Scottish herring fishery. There was no better fishing anywhere than off the coast of Wexford, his own native county. It had been estimated by a Wexford gentleman who looked very closely into these matters, that thirteen vessels from this side of the Channel that fished for four months on the Nymph bank, just off his constituency, earned nearly £10,000. Many other instances of the wealth of the Wexford fishery could be pointed out. When he was a young man, Wexford had about forty oyster boats with six men in each boat. Oysters ranged from 4d. to 9d. per 120. There was one street in the town called Oyster Lane, and the people there all lived by the oyster fishery. Now Wexford had not even one oyster boat constantly fishing, and the price of oysters was 12s. per hundred. That change was brought about by over-fishing. There was no prohibition, and numbers of Jersey and foreign boats fished on the Wexford beds. The French people found those oysters of such excellent quality that they took them away in large quantities, and put them down on the coast of France. He would respectfully suggest that those oyster beds should be relaid and protected, and that the Department of Agriculture should set about it at once. Notwithstanding the wealth of the Wexford fisheries their piers and harbours were in a wretched condition. They had not a single harbour capable of admitting at low water a vessel over thirty tons, and they were desperately handicapped by the want of accommodation for large fishing craft. Wexford Harbour, which was their principal harbour, was silting up, and it frequently happened that vessels bound for Wexford had to go to other ports to discharge their cargoes, and as the cargoes had then to go to Wexford by rail the consumer, of course, had to pay a higher price. Wexford had a weekly cross-Channel service, to both Liverpool and Bristol. Sometimes the steamers could not get out for days, causing heavy losses to the shippers of live stock, and sometimes they could not get in, and then, of course, they had to go to other ports to discharge their cargoes. He might be asked, why were not the services of a dredger requisitioned to remove the silt? The position was this. The Harbour Board had to borrow money to build a large dredger suitable to the port, and the interest paid on that and previous debts left no margin to work the dredger. In fact, the port was run at a loss. Last year he introduced a deputation of Wexford gentlemen to the late Chief Secretary, Mr. Bryce, who made himself thoroughly acquainted with their position and requirements, and promised to come to Wexford and see for himself the state of the harbour; also that he would use his influence with the Treasury to get them a free grant, but added that his influence was very little. Nothing had been done, however, and the question arose—Was the thriving little town of Wexford with 11,000 inhabitants, with extensive ironworks, and cycle factory, giving employment to 1,000 hands, with other local industries as well, with an extensive trade in corn and malt, and live stock, to be blotted off the map for the want of a few thousand pounds to pay off some of the debt and enable the port to be run with advantage? He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to carry out the programme which the late Chief Secretary marked out for himself and, he dared say, would have accomplished if he had remained in office. The Chief Secretaries were in the habit of going north, south, east and west all over the country, except to South Wexford, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman who now so ably filled the office would act differently from his predecessors in that respect. If it was anything in their favour he might inform the right hon. Gentleman that Wexford had never got a grant before and had never asked for one. The people of the county are as self-reliant as the people of any county in the three kingdoms. In proof of that he might mention that since the Wexford County Council took over the piers and harbours from the old Grand Jury it had expended £4,095 upon them, £995 of which was supplied by the Board of Agriculture. At present there was about £22,500 required to put the piers in an efficient condition. Fethard required an extension which would cost about £12,000. At present it was only a little dock and afforded no protection to the fishermen's boats in stormy weather. Some time ago a coal vessel had to leave that dock whilst a fierce gale of wind was blowing, and take her chance outside. The Fethard fishermen were a hardy and fearless set of men, and deserved recognition at the hands of the Government. At present they could only fish for about six months in the year. Duncannon required a new breakwater and dredging. There were several other piers and harbours on the south-east coast in a bad way, such as Ballybrack, Arthurstown, Slade, Kilmore, Carne, Poulduff, Courtown, Blackwater, Wicklow, Arklow, Bray and Greystones. Some wanted repair, others only wanted dredging. The Board of Works was responsible for a great deal of the mischief, because in many cases they carried out erections and improvements contrary to local opinion, and it was only when it was too late they saw their mistake. They required an extension of the Marine Works Act, and he respectfully suggested that the right hon. Gentleman, in considering their claim, should bear in mind that the value of fish taken on the east coast surpassed very considerably the value of fish taken on the north, west, or south coast. What they required was briefly:—(1) Improved accommodation for the fishermen's boats. (2) Loans to the fishermen on easy terms to purchase and maintain well equipped boats. The Irish fishermen, like the Irish tenant farmers, had proved their determination and ability honestly to pay the loans they had been entrusted with. (3) Small dredgers drawing about 4 feet of water. They required two or three of those—each one would cost £4,000. The Board of Works' dredger drew 6 or 7 feet of water, and was utterly useless for small fishing harbours. (4) Protection for their fisheries. The two little armed vessels they had could not afford adequate protection over 2,000 miles of coast line, and besides they were required to carry out scientific experiments, and the result was continual raiding of the fisheries within prohibited limits. About five or six years ago they, in Wexford, got a by-law to stop them, but they often came into the Bay still, as there was no fast steam vessel on the coast to prevent them. Sailing trawlers also came into Wexford Bay in large numbers, and fished almost to the shore, clearing out the bay and doing an incalculable amount of damage by destroying the spawn and immature fish; there should be a law to keep them outside the three-mile limit, because they did just as much damage as the steam trawlers. It would not require much money to carry out the few suggestions he had ventured to put before the House. Enormous sums of money were spent out of Imperial resources on piers and harbours in Great Britain, and they, in Ireland, were entitled to and they claimed a share of Imperial expenditure. Besides, they asked it for reproductive works, and if less money were spent on useless, costly, and meaningless foreign wars and more on reproductive works, it would have a very different effect on the National Debt. Another matter to which he wished to call attention was the great annoyance caused to fishermen by the numerous wrecks in Wexford Bay. He suggested that some vessel of the Fleet, with a crew experienced in the blasting and destroying of wrecks should be sent to operate in Wexford Bay, and so relieve the fishermen of a source of great annoyance.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the sea fisheries of Ireland stand in urgent need of development with a view to the employment of the people, and to stem the tide of emigration; and that the proper development of these fisheries and the subsidiary industries dependent upon them can only be attained by the speedy passing of a Marine Works Act similar to the Act already passed (but largely in abeyance) in connection with the congested districts, but modified to suit the circumstances of the other parts of the country."—(*Mr. Mooney.*)

MR. MOORE said he desired to associate himself, so far as he could legitimately do so, with the arguments which had been addressed to the Chief Secretary by hon. Members below the gangway. He had a certain amount of experience of the House, and well knew that Chief Secretaries were always ready to put their hands on their heart, and declare that the Treasury was the enemy. He had no doubt either, that the right hon. Gentleman would repeat the performance, and possibly at that time the representative of the Treasury would be found to have discovered that important business for the moment called him out of the House. He could not, however, help feeling sorry that the Liberal Party on the present occasion were not more in evidence. The Government had received loyal support from hon. Members below the gangway on various topics, including indentured labour in the New Hebrides, but when it came to a question affecting the prosperity of Ireland, the gratitude of others of their supporters was marked by their desertion of the Liberal and Labour Benches. It was not often that he found himself in association with hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. He could not help feeling it was strange that those hon. Members, who were always shouting throughout their constituencies their desire to abolish the last vestige of English rule, were evidently now most anxious to take the last shilling of English money before they went. "[No!"] Well, he understood that that was the position, that they wanted to get as many grants as possible out of the Treasury before severing the connection with England at the earliest possible date. He was reminded of the historic parallel of the Israelites, who before they cut their bonds with the Egyptians, spoiled them of all they had. Ulster Unionists did not object to the connection with England, and they felt perfectly entitled to appeal to the Treasury for a share of the Imperial funds. There was no inconsistency in that on their part; the inconsistency was on the part of those below the gangway. On the present occasion, however, they were all agreed, apart from the inconsistency of hon. Members below the gangway, that what could be got out of the Treasury should be got for the purposes of Ireland. Irish Unionists, unlike their Nationalist opponents, were not unmindful of what they had received from the Imperial Treasury. For hon. Members below the gangway to say they had not had anything out of the Treasury betokened not only a short memory, but great ingratitude. When they heard about Counties Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford, he would ask what had they got in the last few years? They had received £150,000. In 1883, the sum of £250,000 was granted for Irish piers and harbours. By the Return from which he was quoting, dated in June, 1899, it would be seen that taking the country county by county, Ireland had been by no means ill-treated by the Imperial Treasury; he would say she had been handsomely treated. Then came the Marine Works Act in 1902, under which £100,000 was given for the West of Ireland. Ulster Members, had they been so constituted, might have turned dog in the manger, but they did not adopt that attitude, because the money had been distributed over the West of Ireland, the poorest part.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): What about the Labourers Act?

MR. MOORE: If the hon. Member wanted discussion, he was quite willing to enter upon it, but surely he was not entitled to interrupt him. The Marine Works Act of 1902——[Interruption.] He appealed to the Deputy Speaker. He did not really think he had said anything to justify this interruption.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must ask hon. Members not to interrupt.

MR. MOORE said that according to the Return which he quoted, and which was the last he had been able to get, £250,000 granted by the Treasury had been spent in various counties of Ireland, and another £100,000 under the Marine Works Act. A good deal, therefore, had been done by the Imperial Treasury, and as far as that went he and his hon. friends had very little to quarrel with. He thought, however, that when the Chief Secretary came to look into the figures, he would see that there was a good deal of ground for fair criticism as to how the money had been divided. The mover of the Resolution had referred to Wicklow, Waterford and Wexford, but the Return showed that these three counties had received £150,000. What had been done in the North of Ireland? With the exception of Ardross, over two hundred miles of coast was neglected; although every ship sailing from Canada to Liverpool passed along that coast, the Board of Trade would not even give them life-saving apparatus. What did they find in the case of counties like Mayo and Donegal? They found that they had got £30,000, £25,000 and another county £20,000, while all that was spent between Londonderry and Belfast was £1,300. Nobody pretended that the Board of Works were perfection, but between the Board of Works and the Government there had been a great deal of unfairness. He was glad to have an opportunity of bringing this subject before the Chief Secretary on behalf of those residing on the northern coast, which had been absolutely neglected in regard to the distribution of this money. It was a matter of great importance to the fishermen along the coast, and he was surprised that the hon. Member for North Antrim was not in his place to look after their interests, and voice the opinion of the fisher folk. In 1888 the Board of Works set to work to spend £1,300 in making a boat slip on that coast. That proved that there was some necessity for the work. Unfortunately the following year it was swept away by a gale, and the position of the district was now worse than ever. Although the necessity existed to make that provision at Portadown they had never been able to get another shilling towards restoring the work which was then destroyed. [NATIONALIST MEMBER: You have had a Tory Government in for the last fifteen years.] The hon. Member for North Antrim was a Home Ruler. There was a Home Rule Government in office, and under those circumstances he might be allowed to press this consideration on the Chief Secretary. He would not weary the House with a description of all the harbours and ports in Ireland, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman ought to see that a fair division of the money available for piers and harbours was made in districts where the fishing industry required it. He did not think the money ought to be spent in simply keeping the people quiet in any district or where it would be taken as a counterstroke to the formation of a branch of the United Irish League. They wanted improvements in the northern harbours, the claims for which were not put on political grounds. A great deal was promised between Ballycastle and Portrush. But they would be perfectly satisfied if there was a fair distribution of the funds between the north and the south. People who went fishing from Portrush had to meet in competition their countrymen from Galway, Mayo, and Donegal, who were fishing in boats found by the Fishery Department and who were helped and fostered in every way by the Department, who provided them with bounties and advances for nets and sails and instructors. He did not object to that. All they asked was that when attention was being paid to piers and harbours, the claims of the northern coastline should not be overlooked.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) regretted that the hon. Member for North Armagh was not able to contribute a speech upon this subject without importing into it that bitter spirit which was so frequently characteristic of his addresses in the House. This was not a Party question; it was not even a political one. It was a question which affected the industrial well-being of every part of Ireland. There was not a single Nationalist Member who was not anxious that every portion of the North of Ireland should receive all possible encouragement in the direction of having their piers and harbours kept in a proper state. The speech of the hon. Member could hardly be taken as any encouragement to the Government to deal on liberal lines with the provision of such facilities upon the coast of Ireland. Upon the hon. Member's own showing the amount of money which had been set aside during the last twenty years for improving harbours on the Irish coast had been altogether inadequate. The hon. Member for North Armagh had referred indignantly to the absence of the hon. Member for North Antrim, but in view of the fact that the latter in a fair and open fight had defeated the hon. Member for North Armagh he thought such a taunt was a little ungenerous. He might remind the hon. Member that he was absent from the House for a considerable portion of last year because he could not get any constituency to return him. Last year the hon. Member for North Antrim was close in his attendance at the House of Commons, and served the electors in a way they had never been served before. He would have thought that the hon. Member for North Armagh would on that occasion have put Party feelings on one side and done his best to assist the Nationalist Members in their effort to induce the Government to take immediate and strong action in the direction of putting the coast of Ireland in a proper state, in order that the fishing industry might be developed. There was no necessity to remind the Chief Secretary of the blunders which had been committed in the past. Nobody would attempt to defend the work done by the Board of Works in reference to the harbours, and it was a commonplace in Ireland that everything they put their hand to had turned out a failure. Anyone going round the coast could see by the ruined and dilapidated piers the lack of capability on the part of the engineers of the Board of Works. That was a matter in regard to which they had a right to expect the Treasury to deal with Ireland in a liberal spirit. An hon. Member had taunted the Irish Members with continually asking for the money of the English people. They were doing no such thing, and there was nothing more irritating to Irishmen than to hear such statements not only in reference to loans for harbours and piers but also in reference to land purchase. Not a single shilling was being asked for which would not be punctually repaid. If the Irish had a Government of their own a great deal more would be spent on works of the kind under discussion. He hoped the Chief Secretary would recognise the seriousness of the case which had been made out by his hon. friends. In every part of Ireland there were piers and harbours which were crumbling to ruins, and were positively a disgrace to the Government. Fishermen in every part were unable to pursue their calling and earn a living. There were many parts in Ireland where formerly flourishing fisheries existed, and where now the industry was not followed at all. Nothing extravagant was being asked; they were simply asking that ordinary facilities should be afforded to the people for working in order to avoid emigration. If it was to cost money, the money should be provided. In the last few years the House had been asked to vote money for works at Gibraltar and Dover, and at places abroad. The Irish people had to pay their full share of the cost of those works. Was it unreasonable that they should ask that the piers and harbours on the coasts of Ireland should be put in proper condition? He appealed to the Chief Secretary to deal with the Treasury in a stern spirit and to show that something was due to Ireland. It was perfectly monstrous that there should be strong men all along the coasts of Ireland unable to pursue their calling on account of the condition of the harbours, that their wives and children should be reduced to starvation and privation, and that that should happen under a Government which in other directions spent money with a lavish hand. Let them try to avoid recrimination and Party spirit. If the Government consented to deal with the matter, no persons would be more anxious than hon. Members from the north of Ireland to get a share of the advantages.

*MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) thanked the hon. Member for his kindness in emphasising the point made by the hon. Member for North Armagh that the north of Ireland had not received an adequate proportion of grants. He joined in the invitation that had been extended to the Chief Secretary that he should see for himself the needs of the various harbours. He agreed with all that had been said as to the precarious nature of the fisherman's calling on the stormy waters of the sea board of Ireland, and no class had a fairer claim to Government assistance and special consideration. The point he wished to impress on the Government was that the claim that night was made on behalf of the fishermen, and he did not understand that even hon. Members below the gangway seriously urged the claims of the commercial harbours. In his division they had pressed on the late Chief Secretary the urgent need for the improvement of Port Stewart Harbour, which was essentially a fisherman's harbour. He did not wish to say hard things against the Board of Works, but that harbour was not a credit to the Department, and considerable sums of money were required to make it more easy of access and safer for the fishermen and their boats. His constituency also contained the harbour of Coleraine. Some years ago the people of Coleraine found that unless important works were carried out to preserve the trade of the harbour it would go to decay. The merchants of that day took a large view of the matter and contributed large sums for carrying out important works where the river ran into the sea. They taxed themselves to the extent of 2s. 6d. in the £, and he was happy to think that as the result of their own enterprise, because they never suggested that the Government should help them, the town to-day was one of the most prosperous in the north of Ireland. The tax had now fallen to 9d. in the £ and after another seventeen years had passed the tax would have disappeared and there would be handsome profits from the commerce passing in and of the harbour. That was an example which he would like to see more largely followed in Ireland. It was an example of the foresight, tenacity, and determination to succeed which characterised that part of his constituency, and he commended the example to others who were pleading hat in hand to the Government for the purely commercial harbours. He was there to plead for larger grants for the fishermen. He believed that far too little had been done hitherto by the Government, and he joined hands with hon. Members below the gangway in impressing on the Chief Secretary that there was no more important industry which should be fostered and built up for the good of the country than that of the fishermen and the allied industries.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.) said hon. Members from Ireland were not speaking on behalf of particular places; they were speaking for the whole of the fishing population, on whatever part of the Irish coasts they might be found. The hon. Member for North Armagh had made a better defence of the British Treasury than the Chief Secretary would be able to do when he came to answer. The hon. Member told the House that in the last few years £250,000 had been spent upon fishing piers in the south-east and west of Ireland. That money had not been spent through the generosity of the British Treasury. He was strongly of opinion that £150,000 of the money came from the Irish Church surplus, which was a purely Irish fund. He was not absolutely certain on the point.

MR. MOORE: The whole of the £250,000 came from it. All that I said was that it was granted by the Imperial Treasury.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE said it was perfectly right that the money should be devoted to Irish purposes. If he mentioned the amount of money which had been voted by the House to be spent on English harbours within a comparatively short period, it might assist the Chief Secretary when he came to deal with the matter. Within the last few years no less than £10,000,000 sterling had been spent by the Government on English harbours, and surely a few hundred thousand pounds might be devoted to the improvement and development of Irish harbours. This was not a new question; it might be new to the present Chief Secretary, but it was not to his predecessors. Irish members had been discussing it for a number of years, but with no large result. When the Marine Works

Act was passed, an agitation was started to draw attention to the possibility of the development of Irish fisheries in other parts of the country than in the southern and western districts, to which alone that Act applied. In 1902, the Chief Secretary said that inquiry would be made. In 1903, the right hon. Gentleman said that the inquiry was proceeding. In 1904 he said that the inquiry had not yet terminated, but that before long the result would be made public. Shortly after that there was a debate in the House on the question, and the then Financial Secretary to the Treasury said that, although the Government had not come to a conclusion as to the results of the inquiry, he hoped that the Treasury would not send the Irish members away empty-handed. In 1905 there was a change in the Chief Secretaryship, and when the question was again discussed the right hon. Member for South Dublin expressed his interest in it. In fact, the only Chief Secretary who had taken any real interest in the question was the right hon. Member for South Dublin, who had told the representatives for Ireland that after all no inquiry had taken place, or, at any rate, he could find no record of it; but that he would give his best attention to the matter. The late Chief Secretary was asked to go down to look at the harbours for himself, and to cross-examine his supporters on the Board of Works in Ireland, but he did not go. Every public body in the six or seven Irish counties most interested in the question had urged the Government Departments to take it up. Next to agriculture the fishing industry was the most important and largest industry in Ireland, and gave employment to the largest number of people. He was sorry to say that it had been diminishing of late. Thirty years ago there were something like 9,000 fishing boats on the Irish coast, giving employment to over 25,000 men. Owing to the building of larger boats that number was diminishing, because the small boats could not enter into remunerative competition with the large ones. He hoped that the present Chief Secretary would see his way, before any new political storm arose in the British atmosphere, to visit some of the harbours—for instance, Arklow. The late Chief Secretary promised three years ago a grant of £14,000 for the improvement of that harbour. The money had been voted by Parliament, but not a penny of it had been spent. A wierd literary competition had gone on for two or three years between the various authorities as to Arklow harbour, and the end of it was that an agreement was come to between the Irish Board of Works, the Irish Board of Agriculture, and Messrs. Kynoch, whose cordite works were near Arklow; and the latter consented to contribute towards the expense of the improvement of the harbour. He asked that the agreement should be carried out forthwith, and that the £14,000 voted by Parliament should be spent on the harbour at Arklow, which would be a godsend to the fishermen of that port.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.) said he wished to point out one or two inconsistencies in the statements which had been made in reference to the money that was to go round. The hon. Member for North Armagh had made a charge about the unfair distribution of the money to different parts of Ireland, but he could not help remembering that the hon. Gentleman had supported the Ministry who made that distribution. It was a very bad thing that when there was a change of Government any man should repudiate his previous action.

Mr. MOORE said that the money was voted in 1883, and every penny of it was spent before 1900, when he came into the House.

Mr. SLOAN said he accepted the repudiation of the hon. Gentleman as far as it went. He was only anxious to represent correctly the views of the hon. Member for North Armagh. It would, he thought, be very easy for any Government, either Liberal of Unionist, to deal with existing grievances with remedies which might meet with general and universal approval, and in matters of that sort they ought to rise above the mere level of party considerations. The interests of the fishermen in Ireland should receive the consideration of any Government and the Administration in power should do their best to meet the view of Irish members. He did not think he should be doing his duty if he were to sit silent on this question, which was not one which should create any bitterness. He would ask the Chief Secretary, notwithstanding the little friction which he seemed to be unused to but which he would get accustomed to, to recognise that at the bottom of the controversy there was unanimity as to the necessity of the grievance's being redressed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): Nobody looking at the map of Ireland or having any acquaintance, personal or from reading, of the melancholy ocean which beats against its shores can fail to be convinced of the important part which fishing ought to play in the social history of the country. The fishing trade is there, the fish are there, the natural harbours are there; but undoubtedly, owing to the severity of the sea and the prevailing character of the winds, protection is necessary in order that the industry may be suitably carried on. I cannot agree that no money has been spent upon the piers and harbours of Ireland. It may be worth while to consider, first, what has been done in times past for the harbours and the fishing industry, then the rather disagreeable question of how it has been done; next there remains the question, what ought to be done; and finally, how best any money which Parliament votes or which can be obtained in any way whatsoever can be expended in furtherance of the object which all agree as being necessary. When we consider what has been done with regard to these matters we certainly find that a great deal of money has at different times been passed. There are several Royal harbours, Queenstown, Kingstown, Ardglass and Dunmore, the total original cost of erecting which amounted to £1,740,000, whilst the annual cost of their maintenance is about £12,000. Then I come to fishery harbours, properly so-called, and before the Marine Works Act, 1902, there were two Acts under which public money was granted for the construction of fishery harbours—the Sea Fisheries (Ireland) Act, 1846, and a second Act of 1883. Under the first Act and various amending Acts, 116 harbours were constructed at a cost of £174,000 from public funds, with the aid of local subscriptions to the amount of £86,000. Then there was the Act of 1883. An amount of £250,000 was granted from the Irish Church Fund, and was supplemented by local contributions for the erection and improvement of fishery harbours. Under this Act sixth-three harbours have been constructed or improved, the improvements being in many cases to harbours erected under previous Acts. I am told that the whole of this £250,000 has been spent. Then there have been local contributions amounting to £54,000. The hon. Member for North Armagh rather complained that the remarkable and prosperous part of the country which he represents has been neglected; but I find that of this £250,000 Antrim received £1,344, Down, £18,274, and Derry, £6,229, so that they had a pull from that source of over £25,800. It must not therefore be assumed that their interests have been neglected in this matter. Then we come to the Marine Works Act of 1902, and we find a large expenditure partly from public moneys, but to no considerable extent from private sources. That Act was intended to develop and benefit the interest of the inhabitants of congested districts, and not as the hon. Member pointed out with nice distinction, to develop commercial undertakings. It was for the purpose of fostering the struggling industries in very poor districts. The Marine Works Act provided a sum of £100,000 and of that fund there has been expended on the improvement of fishing harbours £34,296. The balance stood over for the construction of the large harbour at Ennistyre. That harbour has not been constructed and the difficulty in the way arises I believe in regard to the railway connection. In these fishing industries you have always to bear in mind that you can make nothing out of them unless the harbour is near a good market, and in order that it may be near a good market railway communication must be brought up to the harbour side. This Ennistyre scheme has not been carried out, and therefore there remains £51,000 available for other schemes. Then I find also from the figures given to me that the sum of £20,000 has been spent by the Piers and Roads Commission in 1886–7 in the counties of Mayo and

Galway. A special body appointed to construct small works by way of relieving distress—the Congested Districts Board —has spent between 1901 and 1906, £66,626 on small marine works, mostly boat slips. Special grants amounting to £27,000 have been made for certain harbours since 1880. In addition to all this there is an annual expenditure of £10,000 a year, which is allocated by the Board of Agriculture to the fishing industry. A great deal of that is spent upon scientific investigations and kindred matters which are very necessary for a thorough comprehension of the fishing problem; so that the amount actually left for what might be called engineering works is comparatively small. Then there is the natural expenditure from the Irish Development Grant. Ireland would not have been Ireland if the Irish Development Grant had not contributed to almost everything except education, for which it was originally intended. That shews that it cannot be said that any previous Administration has been altogether indifferent to the necessities of the case. The total expended from that grant is £40,514. It ought therefore to be taken as a general admission, not only by the House but by both Parties, that this is really a constant charge to which attention must always be paid. As to the question how has the work been done, there has been some rather gloomy criticisms of these works—but these controversies between engineers and local boards as to the proper way of erecting harbours and protection works are by no means confined to Ireland. As the House will know, all along the East Coast of England, where I have had considerable experience, controversies raged furious between the fishermen and the engineers who came from London, and I am bound to say that my mind was in a state of great confusion as to who were in the right. At all events, the work in many instances had proved most unsatisfactory, and I can only conclude that engineers everywhere have never mastered the action and the peculiar set of tides and the extraordinary changes the sea makes, and, until far more accurate observations are obtained, I am afraid there will always be misfortune in connection with the construction of these works. I do not think anybody can say anything in favour of great loans. In the one place mentioned to-night with which I am acquainted a loan was thrown away. But it must not be supposed that Ireland is the only country in which money has been thrown into the sea. In many other cases stupid blunders have been made and money thrown away. With regard to Arklow Harbour, I must stand up for the Department of which I am told I am the President. That harbour was designed by a local engineer and built by local people. All the Board of Works had to do with it was to lend the money. The local people added piers to the old harbour and they were blown down in a storm. The Board stepped in and built new piers, which were favourably reported on by a Mr. Thomas Stephenson, whose impartiality could not be doubted, because he is a Scottish engineer. The Department are now dredging, and have maintained the channel. £14,000 is waiting to be spent there. If there was any dispute, it was a dispute as to the engineering character of the works, and I really do not know of anything in Ireland or anywhere else by which to prevent these prolonged considerations of engineering problems. After all, you will get the money, and I am told that the differences of opinion are almost completely settled. I not only trust that the work will be carried out, but that it will be a perfect success. Then we come to Wicklow. There difficulty was experienced, I dare say, but I do not think that it can be altogether laid to the charge of the Board of Works. Wexford has been referred to. That is certainly a place well deserving of consideration. It is a prosperous, hard-working place; it has industries of its own, including agricultural implement making and the like, and certainly ought to receive any support that it is possible to give. But there again there are difficulties, so I am told, in connection with the sandy character of the harbour, a circumstance which will require very much consideration. All I can say about the Board of Works is that they do their very best to give such assistance as they can, although I have no doubt that any Board which has me for its President is capable of very considerable improvement. But it is all very well to criticise existing organisations. In any circumstances, and under the most prosperous kind of Government, you will be far more than you like in the hands of engineers and scientific persons, who spend your money for you. At the same time the criticism to which I have listened will not be thrown away. Now I come to the question of what ought to be done in the future, and what is the best way of doing it. With regard to what ought to be done, a great deal can be wisely spent in Ireland in the promotion of the fishing industry, but the difficulty is, how am I to know on behalf of what particular claim I am to batter at the door of the Treasury? The amount of money that might be spent in Ireland is enormous. I do not say it would all be wisely spent; at all events, there is a great number of plans submitted for consideration, for there is scarcely a gap on the coast of Ireland which, in the view of the people living near it, does not possess great advantages as a port. It is on the direct route to Canada; it has facilities for the local industry of fishing, and indeed, when you look at it you cannot but think that money might probably be advantageously spent upon it. Were one a beneficent multi-millionaire one could imagine nothing more pleasant than to go about in a motor-car promising people who came around one that they should have money to benefit their localities and to secure independence for themselves and their children. But some choice has to be made between this enormous variety of schemes, and there it is that the present system is so pre-eminently unsatisfactory. You have your scheme for fishing, which greatly concerns the prosperity of Ireland; you have your arterial drainage schemes, and you have other schemes; and I confess that I am pressed, every time I am in the Lobby, or when I am sitting in my room, by hon. Members who have a real knowledge of the circumstances of the case, and have no personal or pecuniary interest in the matter whatever, coming, as in duty bound, to put schemes before me, who have no pretence to possess sufficient knowledge, even if I were acquainted with the localities, to determine which of them is the best to put before the Treasury. I am in that position. How am I to make a selection? So it often comes about that a scheme is favoured by the Treasury, not because it is the best, but because it has been presented in the best way, for one reason or another, to the mind of the Chief Secretary. That is a pre-eminently unsatisfactory state of things. I confess I think that Ireland will never have justice done to her material resources, or to the character of her people, unless some cure in the form of a more rational method of developing her resources is discovered than the one which at present exists. I feel, I confess, a very great difficulty as to what is the right course to take, where all these various schemes—railway, drainage and fishery schemes—are pressed upon me. I shall do my best. One thing is perfectly clear to me, and that is that legislation should be at once introduced for the purpose of making it easier for localities to contribute towards the making of new works. The present system is that they contribute towards repairs, and sometimes, I think, the law has been rather set on one side. If a little bit of pier is left, that has been repaired out of all existence, and a new work put in its place, and the local authority have been, therefore, unable to contribute. At present, under the law, there is a statutory difficulty in obtaining these contributions from local authorities, and we have already prepared a measure which my right hon. friend the Attorney-General will introduce in the course of a day or two, which will obviate that difficulty, and will enable local authorities to show their sense of the necessity of particular undertakings by being able to contribute to their support. By that means you will get some indication of the necessity of works, owing to the localities concerned being willing to contribute. I am obliged to say, with reference to England, that the practice here is to confine the assistance from the Treasury, for such purpose as piers and harbours, to one third, and the locality is required to find the other two-thirds; therefore, in all comparisons between England and Ireland that fact should be borne in mind. I do not say that these should be the Irish proportions, for one moment; but it is desirable to clear out of our way the difficulties which exist by reason of the defect in our law, and to enable local authorities to support suggestions for the good of their communities by being able to contribute to them out of the rates, and by local subscriptions. I will do my best for the reform which I have indicated, and I shall certainly put as much pressure on the Treasury as I can, though the Treasury is not really a reluctant Treasury, but there is such a variety of schemes, that the Treasury find it easy, from their very multiplicity, to avoid contributing to any. I wish we had some means whereby to make Ireland united upon the demands she makes, for, I believe if that were so, they would be obliged to yield. If we can persuade the Treasury to give us a good lump sum and, as it were, form an endowment fund, out of which we can help the work which is best suited to promote the real interests of Ireland, I think that will be the best course. Failing this I am afraid the Chief Secretary must still remain the target for all the arrows from all parts of Ireland. We have had a good debate and there are many indications of a determination that the different parts of Ireland mean to have their full share. I think we have wandered a little from the Motion before the House. I do not think a Bill such as that suggested in the Resolution is really the best way to accomplish the purpose that we have at heart. I think it is enough that the House should recognise the obligation upon the British Treasury to contribute, so long as the present state of things continue, generously to all well-considered proposals having for their object the maintenance and improvement of the fishing industry of Ireland, and that any legislation that is necessary should at once be proceeded with to take away all obstacles that are at present in the way of local authorities contributing to the works they themselves desire to see established. So far as Arklow and the other places that have been mentioned are concerned, the money has been promised, and the work will be carried out at the earliest possible moment. There are other places also where schemes for piers and harbours are under consideration, and I have every reason to believe that the Treasury will be able to take a favourable view of those proposals. With regard to the Board of Agriculture, of which I am also President, we have at our disposal £10,000 a year, and I am sure that in Mr. Green we have a most able and competent inspector, and that anything he can do he always will do to promote the industry which he has so closely at heart. Though I do not pretend to regard the present position of affairs as anything but most unsatisfactory, and although I only hope I may appear on the scenes in as amiable a light as my predecessor, all I can say is that I shall do my best, both legislatively and by the presentation of the case to the Treasury, to secure further grants for an industry which I recognise from the bottom of my heart is one in which the best interests of Ireland are most deeply bound, and that no effort on my part, and I think I may also say on the part of my colleagues, will be spared in order to do the best we can in the circumstances to secure—I will not say a satisfactory arrangement—but at all events some reform in the existing state of the piers and harbours of Ireland.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): It is not necessary for me to keep the House very long, and I hope I shall say nothing to mar the general harmony which has prevailed throughout the debate this evening. All Irish representatives are agreed that although much has been done in regard to this question much remains to be done, and there is considerable room for improvement. I would like to say that if I had, in substance, delivered the speech which has fallen from the Chief Secretary it would have been receieved very differently by hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, and the reason for the difference in the reception is to be found not in what the right hon. Gentleman really said, but in what he simply referred to by a passing reference. He said that he could not describe the remedy he should propose for the existing state of things. The right hon. Gentleman has paid an eloquent and well-deserved tribute to Mr. Green, the fishery inspector, and every word he has said about him is not only well justified, but a great deal more might truly be said, because this gentleman has brought almost unrivalled experience and the most extraordinary zeal and devotion to the carrying out of his duties. When the Chief Secretary has the opportunity of going round the west coast of Ireland, whether by motor-car or by ship, he will find the most remarkable evidence of the good work that has been done there notwithstanding all the derision which has been poured upon the Office of Works, of which let me assure him he is not the president. I believe that the hon. Member for Longford once attributed the failure of the Office of Works to the fact that they had sought local advice, that it had always been in opposite directions, and that they had adopted a middle course, with the result that they had gone wrong. No doubt there is a good deal of room for improvement, but in the development of the fishing industry there is unquestionable proof of the good work which has been done by those who have been responsible for this branch of Irish industry during the last twenty years. But if I, when Chief Secretary, had suggested that even a partial remedy for the existing state of things was to be found in conferring fresh power on local authorities hon. Gentlemen below the gangway would have poured upon me the ridicule which they are so well able to pour upon those who disagree with them. While I do not disagree with the Chief Secretary's suggestion that there should be amendment of the powers of local authorities, I wish to point out that that would not meet the difficulty raised in this debate. The real difficulty in Ireland is that the local authorities have already contributed the utmost the neighbourhood can afford to pay, or else they are so poor that they cannot make any contribution at all, however great the need may be. The Chief Secretary, as has been his invariable practice since he took office, excused himself on the ground that he ought not to be there and that there should be some other way of arriving at a solution—some devolution of his authority on to the shoulders of others. Let the House remark the comment which the right hon. Gentleman himself made on the existing difficulties. He told us in a humorous passage in his speech that almost every cranny along the coast was held to be of vital importance, and the one place that merited immediate attention. I venture to say that it is only by a mixture of personal inspection and by acquiring information from reports that the right hon. Gentleman can arrive at a decision as to where money can best be spent. I agree with one suggestion that fell from the Chief Secretary, namely, that there is room for material improvement and amendment in the system of administration in this direction, not by devolving these duties on the shoulders of others, but by acquiring greater power for the Minister who after all is really responsible to this House for Irish administration. The right hon. Gentleman told us that he has to go plaintively battering at the door of the Treasury for money, and that he did not know which scheme to recommend first. He will find that not only has he to go battering at the door of the Treasury, but that there are two opinions as to which is the best scheme—the Treasury's opinion and the opinion of his own Department. Supremacy in this matter should rest with the Minister responsible to this House for the Department with which he is connected. If he were able to decide upon a scheme and get the acquiescence of the Treasury without consideration of the particular way in which the money is to be expended, he would make a greater reform in the interests of Ireland, and do more for the material prosperity of Ireland than can be done by any of the rather fanciful schemes to which he has made only a brief and passing allusion. The proposal, as I understand it, is for the amendment of the Marine Works Act. The right hon. Gentleman referred amongst others to a question with which I myself am connected, and if nature had not rendered it impossible for me to do so I should have blushed for the first time in my life at the reference made to myself by the hon. Baronet the Member for Wexford in his speech, because I actually found myself compared with my predecessors—compared in terms which, I think, were intended to convey the impression that in this one particular respect I had excelled them all. This, at all events, I can safely say, that I did give during the short time I was Chief Secretary a considerable amount of attention to the particular questions connected with the improvement of harbours. I rejoice to know that there is a chance of the work at Arklow being carried out without much further delay. I have asked questions, and I have had the greatest difficulty in understanding why arrangements practically arrived at before I left office have been so long in coming to completion. I believe that good results will follow if the right hon. Gentleman is able to aid in the extension of the railway system to that part of the west coast where it is wanted. I believe he will confer greater benefit on Ireland in that way than by any of those schemes to which he has made general reference. I do not wish to delay the House longer. I only rose to point out that I believe the solution of these questions is not so difficult that it cannot be found without any heroic remedies. I have said more than once before in this House that I feel that it is in the direction of the development of these local undertakings—the improvement of harbours and the development of railways—that there will be found the best means of aiding Ireland, and making her people prosperous, and, I would hope, contented.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.) said he rose to make a suggestion which would not require legislation. The coast of Ireland was 2,200 miles in length and for the protection of the fisheries against the depredations of trawlers they had only two small boats provided by the Department. The Scottish Fisheries Board had their own boats for the protection of the fisheries, and in addition three or four, and sometimes five, vessels placed at their disposal by the Admiralty. The Irish taxpayers were contributing their share towards the naval expenditure, but they did not get any *quid pro quo*. He thought the Admiralty should provide some boats for the effective protection of the Irish fisheries. The fisheries were being destroyed by trawlers from all parts. He sincerely hoped that the Government would take into consideration the suggestion thrown out by the Dutch people that all trawling should be prevented within twelve miles of the coasts. The complaint was not peculiar to Ireland. It was made with respect to the Scottish fisheries as well. The proof of that was that the fish were destroyed in such large quantities that the supply was falling off. Only the other day it was stated that the area of sea swept by the trawlers was 1,500 square miles; and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would bear this matter in mind and induce the Admiralty to provide fast gunboats to protect the fisheries along the coast of Ireland.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said he heartily agreed with the hon. Gentleman, but he wished to discuss the question more as one affecting the fishing industry. After all, Pembroke, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Holyhead, Rosyth and other ports in Great Britain were Royal dockyards or harbours, and had nothing to do with the fishing industry. He appealed to the Chief Secretary not to put all his eggs into one basket, but to endeavour to distribute the grants for these works around the Irish coast in fair proportion; remedying, as far as possible, those undertakings which were already established. There were a great many harbours which could be set in working order for a very small sum of money, and after large sums had already been spent a few hundreds in some cases would regain some of the outworks which had been broken down by the seas and strong winds. He put in a claim for the northern parts of Ireland being fairly treated. It was an anomaly that fishermen should have to start out from one part of Ireland unassisted with State funds to compete with fleets from another part of the country subsidised by the Government. Matters could be much better arranged if the Government grants which were made for the purpose of encouraging the fishing industry were more equitably spread around the whole coast. He asked the Government for nothing which was unfair. Many constituents of Members in the north of Ireland earned their livelihood in the fishing industry, and when they saw large sums of money granted in the south and west, they naturally looked for some assistance in following an honourable occupation. He regretted that the only discordant note that night should have been struck by the hon. Member for South Belfast. He thought his attack on the hon. Member for North Armagh was all the more uncalled for seeing that in 1905 the hon. Member for South Belfast divided against this particular

Motion when it was brought forward by an hon. Member below the gangway.

And, it being Eleven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

SUPPLY [6TH MARCH] REPORT.

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, for additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army services, viz. :—

		£
Vote 5.	Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowances, etc. - - -	439,000
" 12.	Miscellaneous Effective Services -	20,000
		459,000
	Less Surpluses on other Votes -	458,900
		100'"

MR. FELL, continuing his speech, complained of the manner in which the War Office had diverted £458,000, savings on votes, from the Sinking Fund for the reduction of the National Debt to other purposes, the Secretary of State having taken that sum for the purpose of acquiring Volunteer drill halls. Next year if the Admiralty, having got the House to pass, say, a vote of £3,000,000 for one purpose, effected a saving upon it, the money might be used for another purpose. He did not see how they could treat the Army in one way and the Navy and other Departments in another. The matter really affected the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury much more than it did the War Office, and he thought they ought to know from those officials whether it was to be treated as a precedent in future, so that any Department saving instead of paying the money into the Sinking Fund for the reduction of debt might appropriate it for other purposes.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The grievance represented by the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is imaginary. This money, which represents the saving on the year's Estimates, will still go to the reduction of the National Debt, though not paid into the Sinking Fund. It will be used by the Public Works Loans Commissioners for the extinction of debt. The only thing that has been done is to the advantage of the nation. The result of this transfer is simply to keep the debt *in statu quo.* By taking a transfer of this debt, the War Office has kept it alive, until and unless Parliament shall determine to release it in favour of those Volunteer corps which are rendering good service to the country. The Public Works Loans Commissioners have not transferred their powers. In law, they remain the creditors, but all the powers are now being exercised for the benefit of the War Office. The Treasury have gone fully into the matter, and it is with their complete assent that the present course is taken—a course dictated by economy and the best interests of the Volunteer corps alike.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) protested against the transaction as illegal and without precedent, inasmuch as it was devised without being referred to the House at all. The saving of half a million, by every constitutional principle, should be handed over to the Treasury at the end of the year, for the reduction of the National Debt. It was proposed that the money should be invested in loans which had already been made by the Public Works Loans Commissioners to the Volunteers. He submitted that there was no power for the War Office, or any other Department, to make investments in loans connected with any other Department, in the absence of statutory authority. All Departments had tried to get the benefit of economies, but such a course had always been resisted by the Treasury, who said that the money must go to the Sinking Fund. Every effort had been made to get over that hard and fast rule. Every legitimate, and not always legitimate, effort had been made by Departments to get the economies of one year carried over to the next to the credit of the Department. He would with interest await the right hon. Gentleman's reply to see whether any case was known where £500,000 saved by a Department in one year went to the benefit of that Department in another. This £500,000 was to be invested in this way: The War Office was investing its savings in a loan made by the Public Works Loans Commissioners, and if things continued as at present the War Office would receive for the next ten or twenty years a sum of £28,000 a year, which would never appear on the Estimates, but which would be at the disposal of the War Office. If, on the other hand, the right hon. Gentleman did as he proposed to do, and abolished the Volunteers, and did away with the Capitation Grant, the War Office would still be in the same position so far as the receipt of that sum was concerned The result of such a transaction would be that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to carry a Bill through the House of which the apparent cost would be £500,000 less than the real cost. He was the last person in the world to be out of sympathy with the War Office, and no one was more in favour of the Vote for the War Office than himself. At the same time it was as well that the House should know what it was doing, and he submitted that the transaction now sought to be sanctioned was absolutely without precedent.

*Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said the Secretary of State for War had told the House that this was a proposal with which they ought to agree, because although it was true that the £500,000 would be diverted from the old Sinking Fund and the extinction of Debt, that it would nevertheless be applied to the extinction of debt through some other channel. He thought the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken. The matter was extremely simple. The War Office having saved this money, it should in the ordinary way go to the old Sinking Fund. The right hon. Gentleman now asked them to intercept the money on its way to the old Sinking Fund, and turn it over to the War Office. What was the right hon. Gentleman going to do with the money when he got it? He was going to pay it to the Public Works Loans Commissioners. And what were they going to do with it? In Section 17 of the Public Works Loans Act, 1875, it was laid down in the plainest language that every halfpenny of money which the Public Works Loans Commissioners received, applicable towards the discharge of any loan which they had granted, was to be turned over not to the National Debt Commissioners, as the right hon. Gentleman appeared to suppose, for the extinction of the National Debt, but was to be paid to the receivers at the Exchequer, to be carried to the Consolidated Fund. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had considered that fact. Not one farthing of the Debt was extinguished at all, in any shape or form. The right hon. Gentleman would no doubt, in the course of the next few weeks, come before the House and take great credit to himself for this half million of money. Its withdrawal from the National Debt would really purchase for the War Office a yearly income of some £28,000 from the Volunteers; and the right hon. Gentleman would no doubt claim that sum every year as an appropriation-in-aid on his Estimates. That was a very different matter from the extinction of the National Debt. He apprehended that what the right hon. Gentleman was asking them to do was to give him half a million of money, and allow him to pay that money through the Public Works Loans Commissioners into the Consolidated Fund, so as to enable him to take credit for £28,000 yearly on the Estimates as an appropriation-in-aid. Not one pennyworth of National Debt was extinguished by this process, which merely transferred another debt in its entirety from the Public Works Loans Commissioners to the War Office. He thought the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman was really misleading, and he hoped he would be able to state in what respect he considered this very remarkable, and he believed unprecedented operation could be in any way said to further the extinction of the National Debt.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury) said that in cases of this kind, where illegality might exist, the difficulty was got over by the passing of the Appropriation Act, which, as the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite knew, overrode other Acts. Any Act could be overridden by the Appropriation Act, and transactions which were illegal without it, became legalised by the passage of that enactment. The hon. Member for Norwood held the view that no debt had been extinguished.

MR. BOWLES: National Debt.

MR. RUNCIMAN said if the interpretation of the hon. Gentleman opposite were correct, he was quite sure that the consent of the Treasury would not have been given to the transaction. It had been described from various points of view, and there were points of view from which it could be made to appear very different. His right hon. friend had not put a large sum of money in his pocket; he had not added to the resources of the War Office to the extent of £458,000. What had happened was that the right hon. Gentleman had taken over the debt due to Public Works Loans Commissioners, who could make use of the transfer to extinguish some of the local loan stock or to make an issue under that fund, and *pro tanto* they did reduce the public debt of the country. Did the hon. Gentleman mean to say that they were not guarantors for the Public Works Loans Fund? To that extent they had reduced the amount from which the national credit was used. What had happened with regard to the War Office? The hon. and learned Gentleman misunderstood the transaction. He appeared to think that the £28,000 was to disappear. It would not disappear; it would appear every year on the Votes as an appropriation-in-aid. Next year they would have on the Vote £28,000, which otherwise would have had to come out of their pockets. If his right hon. friend's scheme went through, it was his intention to cancel the debt, so far as the Volunteers ware concerned. The effect of the transaction was that instead of providing the £458,000 next year he had provided it this year. [OPPOSITION cries of "Hear, hear."] Yes, that was so; his right hon. friend did not incur indebtedness, and then have the indebtedness hanging over his shoulders for some time; he dealt with it when he had the opportunity, and he did it in a way which left the national indebtedness in the same position. As a matter of fact his right hon. friend would not have been able to carry through this transaction if he had not had savings out of which to do it. Savings on the Army Vote, he knew, were rather unknown, and not very largely within the experience of the hon. Gentlemen opposite. He would like to know what was their object in opposing this transaction. Was it because they objected to the amount going to the Volunteers? ["No."] Ah, what new found virtue! Let this transaction be compared with some transactions in times past. In 1895–6 the surplus revenue of £4,200,000 was set apart by right hon. Gentlemen opposite for what? For the extinction of the National Debt? Oh, no—for Naval works. In 1897–8, the surplus revenue, amounting to £2,473,000 was set apart to be applied by the Treasury to Military works. In 1899, out of £3,678,000, the sum of £2,550,000 was applied to purposes of the Public Buildings Expenses Act, 1898. So that this new-found virtue came rather late in the day. When right hon. Gentlemen opposite were responsible for the finances of the country they used such money for current expenses; and now when they had a chance of making a small Party point they made this objection in order to throw an obstacle in the way of a scheme which they dare not openly oppose. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] The attacks which had been made upon the transaction were utterly unfounded, because it left the national credit in just as strong a position as before, and at the same time facilitated the Army scheme which his right hon. friend had laid before the House.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.) said the hon. Member had entirely failed to appreciate the point, which was whether this procedure was legitimate in regard to a scheme which had only been before Parliament for a few days, and had not even been read a second time; and which, it was admitted, that even if passed, could not be perfected for several sessions. While he was at the Treasury every effort was made both from a Parliamentary point of view and certainly from a financial point of view to do everything possible to diminish, if not to destroy, Supplementary Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman had already taken means to finance this proposal out of sums of money voted by Parliament for other purposes. It had been always of recent years laid down that if there was to be a Supplementary Estimate at all, it ought to rest on some plea of urgency. Proof of that was to be found in the Supplementary Vote for the recent explosion at Woolwich, which was a perfectly justifiable Vote. What was the urgency in this matter? There ought to have been a new item appearing under the Volunteer Vote for the year 1907–8. That would have put the matter perfectly in order, and the House would have been capable of dealing with it on its merits, apart from the complication of a Supplementary Estimate. He still thought the House was entitled to have some better reason for the necessity and the urgency of the right hon. Gentleman's financing himself in the manner now proposed. There might be reasons for the hurry, but the House had not been told what they were. The Secretary for War said that the money was available, and that this was a good way of using it. He did not think there was one departmental Minister who would not be delighted to welcome the precedent, but he hoped the House would not allow such a precedent to be established.

*Mr. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) thought the criticisms made by hon. Gentlemen opposite were in a great measure justified. If hon. Members would read the Report of the Public Accounts Committee last year they would see that these surpluses were very jealously watched, and they had always tried to secure them for paying off Debt. He did not think sufficient reason had been given for not paying off some of the National Debt with this surplus. Instead of paying off Debt the War Office made an investment. Either they were going to get £28,000 a year for the investment, in which case they would have an appropriation-in-aid which would diminish the Estimates, or they would not get the amount stated, and in that case there would be no appropriation-in-aid, but also there would be no expenditure under this head in Army Estimates. What was the objection to putting the sum on the year's Estimates? He was not saying a word against the scheme itself. The better the scheme, the less justification there was for what was now proposed. The House did not grudge money for good schemes. The danger was of spending money too freely. The criticism which had been offered in regard to the Government action was sound, and the Government would do well to lay it to heart. This method of using surpluses for fresh expenditure which had not been sanctioned by Parliament was one in which waste most readily occurred in public departments. The Government had certainly brought the matter before the notice of Parliament, and had not silently converted the money to their purposes, as they perhaps might legally have done; but he still thought they would have acted more wisely if they had placed this large sum on next year's Army Estimates.

Mr. WALTER LONG: The Financial Secretary to the Treasury made a speech which, I venture to say, will be read with some consternation by the members of the Treasury. I have had many years experience as the head of more than one Department, and I can say that not only have the Treasury carried out with severity their rule in regard to the use of surpluses, but they have gone a great deal further; they have impressed upon the various Departments that money which stood over at the end of the year must not only not be used by a Department for their own advantage, but that it should not even be held to the credit of the Department. When I have dwelt upon the fact that we have effected economies which ought to be held to our credit, the Treasury have come down as purists in economy and pointed out that we could found no claim on that fact. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury in this case quoted what happened when we were in office in regard to the use of surpluses for certain purposes. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that in regard to the redemption of the National Debt by automatic process there are two opinions held not only by Members on this side of the House, but by hon. Gentlemen opposite as well. Each of these opinions has its supporters and opponents on both sides of the House irrespective of Party, and when the hon. Gentleman tried to suggest that this was a new-found virtue on our part, he entirely forgot that, on each of the occasions to which he referred, when money was used both for naval and for military purposes, the most determined critic of that action of ours was the late Sir William Harcourt. I venture to say that there is not a man now sitting on the other side of the House who, if a Member then, did not cheer him and agree with his criticism. Now, right hon. Gentlemen are compelled by force of circumstances to defend a policy which when sitting in opposition they vigorously condemned. All I can say is that so far not only has there been no defence on the part of the Government, but they have not attempted to address themselves to the charge which we make. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury says that we are attempting in this way to attack the measure in regard to Army re-organisation which we are afraid to attack openly. He had no right to make that observation, for the simple reason that the policy to which he refers has only been disclosed to us in the speech of the Secretary for War. Does the Financial Secretary to the Treasury expect that we should attack the whole policy on hearing the first explanatory statement of the Secretary for War? We have not reached the Second Reading stage of the Bill, and I would respectfully suggest to the hon. Gentleman, who has not had so much experience in these matters as some of us, that he had better not count his chickens before they are hatched, and before the Government has given us an opportunity of attacking their proposals. We are not attacking the application of the money or the scheme which the money is intended to assist. What we are attacking is the way in which the Goverment are making this departure from well-established practice. What we are attacking is the attempt on the part of the Government to do what, if we had done it, they would themselves in opposition have denounced as unconstitutional and improper. I believe that the remarks of the hon. Member for Cambridge University are well founded. This is entirely without precedent, and the Government will find that in future the heads of Departments will rely upon this as a very useful precedent to enable them to lay their hands on money which otherwise would go to the reduction of the National Debt. When we are asked to look upon this as a natural proceeding, because, as the Financial Secretary to the Treasury said, if you do not reduce the National Debt, you will reduce the national indebtedness by the process he describes, I can only say that that is begging the question. The Act of Parliament provides for the reduction of the National Debt; it does not make provision for the reduction of local debt in the way here proposed. [Cries of "Divide."] I do not wonder that hon. Gentlemen opposite wish to divide. It is not the first time in the last forty-eight hours that the Government have endeavoured to show that what they said was black before is white to-day. They feel that their withers are wrung, and they wish to escape from the situation. They will find that they do not meet difficulties of this kind by saying "Divide." I believe that the course taken by the Government will form a very grave precedent, and that it will lead to difficulties both for themselves and their successors.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 208; Noes, 51. (Division List No. 42.)

AYES.

Abraham, Wiliam (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Armitage, R.
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, SirJWilliams(Devonp'rt)
Benn, W. (T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bowerman, C.W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T.A.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs, Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Chas.
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard K.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Coats, Sir T. Glen (Renfrew, W.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cogan, Denis J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H(Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalmeny, Lord
Davies, David (MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dolan, Charles Joseph
Duffy, William J.
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)

Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gardner, Col. Alan (Hereford,S
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E.(Derbyshire,NE.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hogan, Michael
Idris, T. H. W.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Maclean, Donald
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeigh, Chas. (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G. Croydon (Launceston
Massie, J.
Meehan, Patrick A.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Chas. N. (Doncaster
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Captain Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon,N.)
O'Malley, William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E.B.(Bradford,E.
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rendall, Athelstan
Renton, Major Leslie
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richardson, A.
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, Chas. H. (Lincoln)
Robertson, SirGScott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herb. L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H.(AshtonunderLyne)
Shaw, Rt. Hn. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thos. F. (Leitrim, S.)
Spicer, Sir Albert
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J.E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Ward, John (StokeuponTrent)
Waring, Walter
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson,J.W.(Worcestershire,N.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barnes, G. N.
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Bowles, G. Stewart
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cavendish, Rt.Hn. Victor C.W.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain Jas. (Down, E.)
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers-
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Fell, Arthur
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hunt, Rowland
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col.A.R
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin,S.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Moore, William
Nield, Herbert
O'Grady, J.
Pease, Herb. Pike (Darlington)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'm't'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Starkey, John R.
Thomson,W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Walsh, Stephen
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Rawlinson.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1907, the sum of £71,715 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, the sum of £38,114,700 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow. Committee to sit again to-morrow.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the clock on Tuesday evening Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

APPENDIX I.

MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE RELATING TO THE ARMY ESTIMATES FOR 1907-08.

TOTAL ESTIMATES.

The sum which Parliament is asked to vote for Army Services in 1907–08 compares with the total of the Estimates for 1906–7 as follows :—

	£
1906–07	29,796,000
1907–08	27,760,000
Decrease	2,036,000

This decrease, however, does not represent the total of the savings that have been effected, as it has again been necessary to find money to meet the automatic growth of certain charges, viz. :—

	£
Amount by which the Estimates of 1906–07 were reduced, owing to the depletion of the Regular Infantry in that year	90,000
Increased cost of Army Reserve	141,000
Increased charge for stores and clothing, due to the reduction of the surplus stocks available from the South African War	187,000
Increased cost of the Militia (including Reserve)	35,000
Increase of the Vote for Works, owing to closing of loan expenditure	42,000
Increased charge for service of loans	41,000
Increased charge for pensions	38,000
Total	574,000

The reductions effected thus amount in total to some 2,600,000*l*.

This figure includes a decrease of 699,000*l*. in the amount provided for the Re-armament of the Horse and Field Artillery with quick-firing guns. The progress of expenditure on this scheme has been more rapid than was originally anticipated ; and the sum of 488,000*l*. to be voted in 1907–08 will complete the equipment of the Artillery with these guns. The total cost will have been 3,116,000*l*.

The total reduction in the Estimates would have been still larger but for the fact that a reduction of etablishments does not at once produce a saving equal to the whole cost of the officers and men reduced. They cannot be summarily struck off the books, but must be allowed to finish their engagements ; nor can all share of promotion be denied to them. The reduction of actual strength must be effected by taking fewer cadets and fewer recruits ; but here again the stoppage cannot be made abruptly. Everything practicable has been done during the year 1906–07 to bring the actual strength of the Army to the level of its new establishment, but provision has to be made in the Estimates of 1907–08 for considerable numbers of supernumeraries. Recruiting as a whole continues to be good, and one result of this has been that the depletion of Line Infantry battalions at home, due to the efflux of three years men to the Reserve, is rapidly disappearing.

APPENDIX I.

Loan Expenditure.

Besides the reduction of the Estimates, the restriction of expenditure of borrowed money calls for notice. In the ten years from 1896–97 to 1905–06, the total amount spent under Army Loans was 15,754,000*l.*, an average of 1,575,000*l.* a year. It was decided early in 1906 not to exhaust our borrowing powers under existing Acts, but to wind up the Military Works Loan as soon as certain indispensable services had been finished. The expenditure in 1906–07 will amount to some 650,000*l.* and in 1907–08 probably to a similar sum.

GROWTH OF ARMY EXPENDITURE, 1896–1907.

During 1905–06 and 1906–07, the Estimates of which years were of practically the same total, the peace expenditure of the Army may be said to have reached high-water mark ; and I have been at some pains to analyse the causes of the great growth which took place between the years 1896–97 and 1906–07. In that period the Estimates, for peace services only, increased by 11,741,000*l.*, of which 11,231,000*l.* was for effective services, and 510,000*l.* for pensions.

Growth of Pensions.

This growth of the pension charges is of course largely due to the South African war, but by no means entirely so. Increases in the numbers of the Army and in scales of pension take many years before they produce their full effect on the non-effective votes ; and, in regard to officers especially, the pensions now being paid pertain to a period when the Army was much smaller than at present. There is a further growth of 38,000*l.* in the non-effective votes this year, which now account for no less than 3,596,000*l.* out of the total Estimate of 27,760,000*l.* ; and unfortunately there is every prospect of this growth continuing for some years to come.

Cost of Personnel.

Of the 11,231,000*l.* by which the Estimates for effective services in 1906–07 exceeded those for 1896–97, 9,301,000*l.* was due to the increased cost of personnel. After allowing for the increases on Medical Services (402,000*l.*), Army Reserve (405,000*l.*), Staff Departmental Services and Schools of Instruction (842,000*l.*), Militia (487,000*l.*), Yeomanry (424,000*l.*) and Volunteers (625,000*l.*),* there remains 5,916,000*l.* as the increased cost of the Regimental units of the Regular Army. Of this sum, 3,300,000*l.* represents the cost of 1,660 officers and 41,800 men added to the Army ; while the numbers existing in 1896–97 cost more by 2,616,000*l.* in 1906–07 than in the earlier year, the increase per head being about 23*l.* for officers and 17*l.* 7s. 6d. for men. Among the causes of these increases may be mentioned the additions made to the more expensive corps (Artillery, Engineers, Foot Guards, &c.), the larger force maintained at the most expensive station (South Africa), and the better scale of barrack accommodation, &c., now provided. But besides these causes, which apply to both officers and men, the average cash payments to the individual soldier have been increased, by the grant of messing allowance, kit allowance, and service pay, to the extent of some 10*l.* a year, after allowing for the abolition of deferred pay. The question of the soldier's emoluments is further dealt with below, under the head of Service and Proficiency Pay. Meanwhile, it may be mentioned that a sum of 49,000*l.* is included in the Estimates of 1907–08 for the provision of better furniture for married soldiers' quarters ; for the furnishing of separate dining rooms for the rank and file in barracks where the necessary space can be found, and of rooms for the use of the Army Temperance Association ; and for improving the furniture of serjeants' messes. In the years 1902–03 to 1906–07 a total sum of 135,000*l.* was provided for similar purposes.

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* Owing to an alteration in the date of payments of Capitation allowances amounting to 200,000*l.* in 1896, the sum actually voted for the Volunteers in 1896–97 was less by 825,000*l.* than in 1906–07.

On the other hand, the pay of regimental officers has remained practically unchanged. The lieutenant-colonels commanding regiments of Cavalry and battalions of Infantry, with their heavy responsibility and the many calls to which they are exposed, are badly paid as compared with the officers serving under them; and I hope to be in a position to effect some improvement in the pay of these and possibly other lieutenant-colonels in the coming year.

CHARGES OTHER THAN PERSONNEL.

The chief factors of the increase of 1,930,000*l.* under this head were the growth of Loan annuities (894,000*l.*), the larger numbers of horses maintained (544,000*l.*) and the increased charge for warlike stores arising from the special provision in 1906–07 of 1,187,000*l.* for new Horse and Field Artillery equipments.

1907–08 COMPARED WITH 1906–07.

Without entering upon an exhaustive analysis of the Estimates of 1907–08 on the above lines, the savings of 2,036,000*l.* in those Estimates may be allocated approximately as follows :—

Reductions in cost of personnel :—	£	£
Regulars		980,000
Colonial and Channel Islands Militia		5,000
Yeomanry		17,000
Volunteers		125,000
		1,127,000
Less increased cost of Army Reserve	141,000	
,, ,, Militia	35,000	
provision for Reserve Officers	50,000	
		226,000
Net reduction, personnel		901,000
Reductions in armaments, stores, clothing, and miscellaneous service		960,000
Reductions in horses		296,000
		2,157,000
Less increases :—		
Works services	42,000	
Loan annuities	41,000	
Pensions	38,000	
		121,000
Net reduction		£2,036,000

STAFF, COMBATANTS AND DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES.

The total effective charge for personnel of the Regular Army (excluding the War Office and the Army Reserve) in 1907–08 is 15,261,000*l.*, of which 400,000*l.* is for Staff, 12,391,000*l.* for Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers and Infantry, and 2,470,000*l.* for Medical and Departmental Services (including Labour Establishments).

APPENDIX I.

ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE REGULAR ARMY.

The establishments of the several arms of the Regular Army have been subjected to a methodical examination, special attention having been directed to the two chief determining factors, viz., the Colonial and Indian garrisons to be maintained in peace, and the force which can be put into the field in an organised form.

FIELD FORCE.

An Order was published in January last providing for the reorganisation of the Home part of the Regular Army. The basis adopted was simply that of taking the number of combatant units actually in existence at Home and necessary for the maintenance of the Colonial and Indian garrisons, and organising these units into a force containing a due proportion of all arms; the size of the Field Force thus being limited by the establishment which it is necessary to preserve in order to find drafts and reliefs for the force abroad.

The Army at Home, so organised, will furnish a Cavalry Division of four Brigades, six Infantry Divisions of three Brigades each, and a complement of Army troops and troops for lines of communication. The Divisions have been arranged on a larger scale of three Brigades in order to make them correspond with the organisation of the British Army in India. To make the new organisation possible, it has been necessary carefully to consider what parts of the existing organisation were defective. It was found that, owing to the deficiency in administratve elements, such as Ammunition Columns, Army Service Corps, and Army Medical Corps, it would be, as things at present stand, impossible to mobilise as a fully organised force much more than half of the existing combatant units. With a view, among other things, to making possible the provision of these deficiencies reductions have been made in Regular combatant establishments, surplus to what is required for the organisation of their six Divisions, amounting to about 16,000 men.

Of the ninety-nine batteries of Field Artillery now at Home, only sixty-six are required for the mobilisation of the six Divisions; though of these, owing to the present deficiency of reservists to complete ammunition columns, only forty-two can be mobilised. The thirty-three surplus batteries it is proposed to form into training brigades which will train men on a non-Regular basis, to bring the personnel of the Artillery up to its full requirements, including the ammunition columns now lacking.

No reduction, however, of the establishments of the Regular Artillery can properly be made until personnel, trained on a non-Regular basis to the requisite extent, is ready to fill the gap. All the battery establishments of Horse and Field Artillery consequently remain for the present unchanged; certain economies wholly unconnected with this question have, however, been effected in the establishments of Artillery depots.

Of the other troops surplus to the requirements of the new organisation, two battalions of Foot Guards have been dispensed with, and disbandment has been ordered. One has already ceased to exist, but the other, the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards, is usefully employed in temporarily strengthening the British Force in Egypt. The necessity of finding, with due regard to economy, the money necessary for making good the deficient elements in the new force renders it impossible to maintain units of any arm in excess of its due proportion.

Eight battalions of the Line have been reduced from the Colonial Establishment as described below, but as the Home battalions perform the vital function of providing drafts for battalions abroad, no more could be dispensed with while the force abroad remains at its present establishment.

Steps are being taken to make good the considerable deficiencies which, as already stated, exist in administrative troops, such as medical, transport, and other departmental services. It would, however, be both extravagant and unnecessary to give all the personnel of these services the costly training of the British regular soldier. Careful investigation is in progress as to what proportion of this personnel is required at the beginning of the campaign to consist of fully-trained Regulars, and what proportion may be civilians specially trained for a sufficient period. The necessary plans for providing this non-Regular personnel, or Special Service Division, and giving it the necessary training, are being closely worked out.

COLONIAL GARRISONS.

Infantry.

The consideration by the Committee of Imperial Defence of the garrisons maintained at Colonial stations has enabled the Army Council to make the withdrawal above referred to of eight battalions of British Infantry—four from South Africa, two from Malta, one from Gibraltar, and one from Ceylon, which will be replaced by a Native battalion.

On the other hand, the establishment of all battalions remaining in the Colonies has been raised from 766 to 840 rank and file. This increase in the strength of the ten battalions remaining in South Africa, together with the addition of a fifth Cavalry regiment there, very largely compensates for the reduction made. The result of these changes is to reduce the number of Line battalions abroad (including India) from eighty-five to seventy-seven, so that if the present total number of 156 Line battalions were maintained, we should have for the first time since the Cardwell system was established a majority (79) at Home. But these eight battalions are not required for the Field Force; their disbandment leaves us with only the manageable number of three two-battalion regiments with both battalions abroad, as against seven in the establishments of 1906–7, and under present conditions the Government considers that their retention on the Home establishment would not have been justified. The realisation of the Cardwell ideal of equal numbers at Home and abroad, thus brought within reasonable distance, may not be long delayed.

It has also been found possible to remove two Native Indian battalions from Mauritius, one going to Ceylon to replace the British battalion withdrawn, and one returning to India, where it is no longer a charge upon Army Votes; and to disband the Chinese Regiment.

Garrison Artillery.

A joint Naval and Military Committee, under the presidency of General Sir J. F. Owen, after completing an examination of the fixed coast defences at Home stations, undertook a tour of inspection to examine into the armaments of our Coaling stations. Their recommendations have led to considerable reductions in Garrison Artillery establishments at Home and abroad; but the proposed changes have not yet all been fully worked out.

ESTABLISHMENTS AND TERMS OF SERVICE.

The number of units of each arm to be maintained on the Home establishment having been fixed, the question of the peace establishment to be assigned to each unit remains. This and the closely allied question of the length of the soldier's service with the Colours and in the Reserve form a subject of considerable complexity, requiring for its proper treatment much careful calculation and study of several factors, among which may be mentioned the proportion of the strength of each arm abroad to that at Home, the drafts necessary and the organisation for finding them, the possibilities of recruiting, the regular reservists required on mobilisation and to make good waste in the field, the length of service necessary to make an efficient soldier of the several arms, the strength necessary for a unit in peace for training purposes, &c. This investigation is not yet complete for all arms of the Service, but much has been done towards putting this part of the subject on a scientific and, it may be hoped, a permanent basis. The following have been fixed as the periods of Colour service for the principal arms :—

Cavalry and Infantry	7 years (with 5 in Reserve);
Horse and Field Artillery	6 years (with 6 in Reserve);
Garrison Artillery	8 years (with 4 in Reserve);

with power to retain a man for such portion of an additional year with the Colours as may be necessary, if he be abroad on completing his term of Colour Service.

Notwithstanding the return to the shorter period of Colour service for Infantry of the Line, and the consequent eventual increase in the Indian and Colonial drafts, the Army Council are satisfied that the establishment of each Home battalion admits of being reduced from 750 to 720 rank and file.

Cavalry.

The Cavalry organisation represented in the Estimates of 1905–06, and provisionally continued in those of 1906–07, depended upon the formation of two large depots for supplying drafts to regiments abroad. The buildings and training grounds necessary for these depots do not exist, and it has been decided to omit them from the establishments of 1907–08, maintaining the regiments at Home at an establishment which will enable them to find drafts for those abroad. The details of the Cavalry organisation are, however, not yet fully settled.

GENERAL STAFF.

An Army Order was issued in September last, creating a General Staff for the Army, thus completing the reform begun, under my predecessor, by the creation of a Department of the Chief of the General Staff in the War Office itself.

MEDITERRANEAN COMMANDS.

For many years the Commanders-in-Chief at Malta and Gibraltar have also been charged with the responsibilities of the civil government of those Colonies; and it has been necessary to provide a complete staff, general, administrative and personal, on a liberal scale at each station. At the same time these two commands, as well as the third Mediterranean command of Egypt, have been entirely independent of one another, without any provision for co-ordination except through the War Office itself. In view of the progress made with decentralisation from the War Office, it has been decided to appoint a purely military Commander-in-Chief, with no civil duties, for the Mediterranean as a whole, to be stationed at Malta. No increase in cost of any kind will result from the new arrangements.

SERVICE AND PROFICIENCY PAY.

An alteration of some importance has been effected in the rules under which the soldier draws his pay. Under the scheme of general three years' enlistments it was necessary to hold out a substantial inducement to the soldier to extend his service with the Colours to eight years, in order to supply drafts to India and other garrisons abroad; and this inducement took the form of " service pay " at rates varying from 4*d*. to 7*d*. per day, payable to men of two years service and upwards who so extended. This service pay, however, which was costing the country over a million a year, failed to induce men to extend in the requisite numbers, and for some time grave difficulty was experienced in supplying India with drafts. The general three years' term of enlistment having consequently been abandoned, and the main principle of the system of service pay, viz., payment for length of service, having therewith disappeared. it became necessary to reconsider the general question of the soldier's emoluments.

It appeared, in the course of enquiry, that the giving of extra pay merely for extension of service, without any qualifying standard of military efficiency, threatened to militate seriously against the efficiency of the Army. Men no longer found it worth their while to qualify as signallers or other specialists or even, in some cases, to take up the duties and responsibilities of non-commissioned officers. On the advice of the Army Council, and in accordance with the recommendations of a predominantly military committee, an important change has been made. Subject to the vested rights of individuals in the Service at the time the change took effect, extra pay will no longer be given for mere length of Colour service; but men of over two years service will be eligible for Proficiency Pay, at rates of 3*d.* or 6*d.* a day, each rate being given only for the attainment and maintenance of a defined standard of skill in musketry, signalling or some other branch of military proficiency, together with a 3rd Class Certificate of general education. This proficiency pay will not be given in specialised corps such as the Royal Engineers and Army Service Corps, the men of which already draw, in addition to their regimental pay, varying rates of "corps" or other special pay according to their skill in their own special duties. Various minor restrictions formerly adhering to the grant both of service pay and of the messing allowance of 3*d.* a day, have at the same time been withdrawn.

The general result of these changes, as individuals with vested rights pass out of the Army, will be in course of time to produce a substantial saving on the Pay Vote. As money becomes available from this source, it is intended to give the soldier, from the date of enlistment, the messing allowance of 3*d.* a-day additional to his pay, which he at present receives only after 6 months' service.

MEDICAL SERVICES.

The principles of sanitation are being steadily inculcated in the Army by means of a School of Army Sanitation at Aldershot for combatant officers and men, and for non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Army Medical Corps, by the compulsory examination of all officers in hygiene, the distribution of literature, and the delivery of lectures by officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps. By these means, and by the institution of sections of specially trained men to look to the sanitary affairs of units in the field, it is confidently hoped to reduce the proportion of sick in future campaigns.

AUXILIARY FORCES.

A careful survey has been made of the condition of the Auxiliary Forces. Investigation has shown that it is beyond question that the existing organization of these forces is such as to make it impossible to use them with full advantage to the nation.

Proposals for the reorganization of the Auxiliary Forces, by which it is hoped to adapt them to our military requirements, will be laid before Parliament in due course. It will, however, be impossible to put these proposals into effect during 1907–08; and accordingly no provision for them appears in these Estimates. A Supplementary Estimate will be presented for the year 1906–07 to provide the sum necessary to enable the War Office to take over from the Public Works Loan Board the mortgages secured on Volunteer drill halls and other property of the corps, which are held by that body. The charge will be met out of savings on the Army Votes of 1906–07; and the effect on the Estimates of 1907–08 will be to reduce them by the amount (about 28,000*l.*) repaid in the usual course as interest and sinking fund for these loans. In the event of the new scheme receiving the sanction of Parliament, and of the War Office taking over the existing secured debts of Volunteer corps, the operation will in this way be greatly facilitated.

APPENDIX I.

MILITIA.

The numbers of the Militia fell from 98,812 on 1st January, 1906, to 97,632 on 1st January, 1907. This is partly due to the recruiting and re-engagement for the Militia Submarine Miners having been stopped in view of the transfer of their duties to the Navy.

The experiment referred to in my Memorandum for 1906–07, by which the recruits of 20 selected battalions drill for 6 months on enlistment instead of 63 days, has attracted recruits to these battalions in large numbers, and during the coming summer the selected battalions will undergo a lengthened training of 6 weeks instead of 27 days. The results of this interesting experiment, which necessitates an increase in the Militia Vote, will continue to be carefully watched.

VOLUNTEERS.

The strength of the Volunteers on 1st January, 1907, was 248,416, as compared with 241,708 on 1st January, 1906, an increase of 6,708. 5,343 less attended camp, but on the other hand there was an increase in the number of efficients of 10,693.

The special Field Army Brigades have ceased to exist; but in their place forty-four brigades of Infantry Volunteers have been established, with permanent Brigadiers and Brigade-Majors. The whole of the Volunteer Infantry are thus under their own Brigadiers for all purposes throughout the year.

SHORT RIFLE.

The output of short rifles has been satisfactory, and more than suffices to re-arm the whole of the Regular Forces, including reservists. The Cavalry have all been re-armed, also the Infantry at home, and certain other units. Issues to Infantry abroad are being made as rapidly as possible, and will shortly be completed.

The programme for 1907–8 is sufficient to provide reserve arms for the whole of the Regular troops.

A modified long rifle, suitable for charger loading, has been approved for the Volunteers, and the conversion of existing long rifles, will begin in 1907–08.

RE-ARMAMENT OF HORSE AND FIELD ARTILLERY.

The progress contemplated in the original programme has been more than realized. The supplies demanded by India have been completed and issued; the re-armament of the batteries in the Field Army and in South Africa is completed. Of the training batteries, some are completely equipped, and the remainder are being provided with sufficient guns for training and will, it is anticipated, be completed before the coming practice season.

Good progress has been made towards the selection of an improved pattern of Field howitzer; and provision is made in these Estimates for the commencement of manufacture, so that the re-armament of the howitzer batteries may be actively proceeded with in 1908–09.

SUPPLY OF OFFICERS.

SANDHURST.

It is recognised as desirable that cadets should remain at Sandhurst for two years before joining their regiments; but the present accommodation there is so limited that in order to supply the numbers of officers now required by the British and Indian Armies it has been found necessary to reduce the course to one year. As a makeshift, an extra class of Sandhurst cadets is at present accommodated at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, where rooms are temporarily available; but the enlargement of Sandhurst is a pressing necessity, and funds for the purpose have been set aside out of the limited sum remaining available under the Military Works Loan.

APPENDIX I.

Reserve of Officers.

Large numbers of officers of all arms are required on the outbreak of war, in addition to those employed with the Regular Army in peace. As matters stand at present, these cannot be found from the Militia and Volunteers, these forces being themselves seriously short of officers. The question of supplying these requirements is one of considerable difficulty, and has been engaging the attention of the Army Council for some time past. A Committee including representatives of the Universities and Public Schools is now sitting at the War Office, and it is confidently hoped that, as a result of its deliberations, practical steps may shortly be taken to begin the formation of this most necessary reserve. A sum of 50,000*l*. has been provided in Vote 1 for expenditure on this service in 1907–08.

ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING OF OFFICERS.

A new course of training for Army officers has been inaugurated at the London School of Economics. It is specially designed to train officers in business and commercial methods, in order to fit them for administrative posts. The subjects to be taught include Accounting, Commercial Law, Carriage by land and sea, Economic Theory, Economic Geography, and Statistical Method, all of which will be treated from the point of view of Army requirements.

R. B. HALDANE.

18*th February*, 1907.

APPENDIX II.

STATEMENT EXPLANATORY OF THE NAVY ESTIMATES, 1907-1908.

The Estimates presented to Parliament show a reduction of 1,000 men, from 129,000 in 1906–1907 to 128,000 in 1907–1908, and, as I explain below, a reduction of 1,427,091*l.*, from 31,869,500*l.* to 30,442,409*l.*

The Vote for Works must be dealt with separately in the consideration of this year's Estimates, because a new policy has been adopted with regard to them. It has been resolved that there shall be no more Loan Bills to complete the large Works authorised under the series of Works Loan Acts ending in 1905, but that an expenditure under the heads there detailed shall be charged on the Votes of each year. The estimate for Works schduled in the Loan Act of 1905 has been carefully reviewed with the object of reducing it to the lowest limit consistent with the requirements. of the service. Certain items of Works not actually begun have been struck out. Some of them may eventually require to be carried out, and will then be considered for future inclusion in the Works Vote.

	£
The aggregate of Estimates for Works provided for in the Loan as shown in the Act of 1905 is ..	32,206,933
This it has been found possible to reduce to	29,840,000
A reduction of	£2,366,933

Of the funds authorised by Loan Acts already passed, about 1,916,000*l.* will still be available on the 1st April, 1907. With the objects of completing as many Loan Works as possible out of Loan Funds, and of affording some relief to the Ordinary Estimates of 1908–9, it is proposed that this balance should be thus approximately distributed :—

	£
In 1907–8	1,478,000
In 1908–9	438,000

The total expenditure for Works, including a charge for machinery hitherto met by loan, will stand thus for 1907–8 :—

	£
For Works to be paid for out of money already provided by loan	1,478,000
Annuity in repayment of loans, including an increase of 120,093*l.*	1,214,402
Works, machinery, etc., hitherto provided by loan ..	977,091
Ordinary Works and Services	673,173
	£4,342,266

The Admiralty have thus to bear this year an increase of 120,000*l.* on annuity to repay loans, and 977,000*l.* to pay for Works, a charge which, until this year, was found from money specially borrowed under the Loan Acts which sanctioned them. While, therefore, the total Estimate of 31,419,500*l.*, compared with last year's total of 31,869,500*l.*, shows a reduction of only 450,000*l.*, the actual reduction of the Board of Admiralty have been able to effect in their Estimate for Naval expenditure for the coming financial year amounts to 1,427,091*l.*

APPENDIX II.

New construction for the year will cost 8,100,000*l.*, as against 9,235,000*l.* for 1906–7, the corresponding reduction on the Ordnance Vote being 497,500*l.*

Administration.

The changes in the conduct of business at the Dockyards, introduced 18 months ago, have worked smoothly and well, and I think the nation has now every reason to be satisfied that the administration of its Dockyard work is conducted in a business-like and practical manner.

A reorganisation has been effected whereby the office of Chaplain of the Fleet in again combined with that of Chaplain of Greenwich Hospital, and the work of Inspector of Naval Schools, hitherto performed by the Chaplain of the Fleet, has been transferred to the Director of Naval Education.

On the retirement of Sir Henry Pilkington, under whose able charge the vast series of Loan Works has been carried out during the past 12 years, the Director of Works has been invested with the additional office of Civil Engineer-in-Chief of the Loan Works, and has amalgamated, for the period remaining for their completion, the Works Loan Department with his own.

The Admiralty has suffered during the year, and has to contemplate in the near future serious loss among its highest officers. Sir Gordon Miller, Accountant-General of the Navy, died suddenly in his room at the office, and the Admiralty has to mourn the loss of a most energetic and capable public servant. Sir David Gill, Astronomer at the Cape, has just retired after a service under the Admiralty of 28 years, during which he has made himself a reputation second to none in the scientific and astronomical world. and has brought the Observatory at the Cape to a condition of efficiency which can hardly be surpassed. The close of the present financial year coincides with the retirement, under the age limit, of Sir Evan MacGregor, G.C.B., Permanent Secretary at at the Admiralty under eight Administrations, after 47 years' service in the Admiralty and 23 years as Permanent Secretary. To the Department and the Service Sir Evan MacGregor's name has long been a household word, and he will, I am sure, carry into his retirement the best wishes of all who have been his colleagues and subordinates during his long and distinguished period of public service.

A difficulty arose early in the year owing to the interference caused by the London County Council Electric Generating Station at Greenwich with the Royal Observatory. After considerable discussion, a joint committee, presided over by Lord Rosse, and containing representatives from the Admiralty (Dr. J. A. Ewing, Director of Naval Education) and from the London County Council (Sir Benjamin Baker, K.C.B.), was appointed to investigate the matter, and their report has just been presented to Parliament. The thanks of the Government are due to the committee for their labours and for the suggestions made by them to alleviate the difficulties arising from vibration, and for minimising the interference to observations from vapour issuing from the chimneys. The Admiralty are prepared to accept the recommendations of the committee as satisfactorily meeting the present needs of the Observatory, provided that they are faithfully carried into effect in the working of the London County Council electrical installation at Greenwich.

Personnel.

The changes in the establishment of the War Course College which have been in progress during the past year were completed in November 1906 by the commissioning of H.M.S. *Terpsichore* at Portsmouth as the headquarters of the War Course College, in command of Captain E. J. W. Slade, M.V.O., R.N., under whose superintendence the courses had previously been conducted. The War Courses had been started earlier in the year at the Port, in the building which had been at one time the School of Naval Architecture and which required only small structural alterations in order to adapt it to its new purpose. The War Course College as now constituted will be in the same position as the gunnery and torpedo establishments, and will rank among the Fleet services and no longer among the purely education services with which it was at first associated. In placing the headquarters of the War Course College at Portsmouth care has been taken to provide for the continuance of modified courses at Devonport and Chatham, where lectures have been given on strategy, tactics, naval history, and international law, and modern improvements in marine engineering, besides other naval and military subjects. One full course was held last year at Portsmouth, which was attended by 38 Naval Marine, and Military officers. The course which commenced in October has been attended by 40 officers. The full war course at headquarters has been extended to four months, and lectures were given during the course on the following subjects:—marine engineering, naval history, international law, tactics, trade, wireless telegraphy, organisation of signal stations, armour plates and explosives, telegraph cables, mining, gun mountings, control of fire and effects of fire, combined operations and coast defence, battle practice.

Representations having been made that existing Engineer officers under the orders promulgated since 1902 have not been given certain advantages which they had been led to expect at the time the new scheme of entry and training was promulgated, and it being also desirable to ascertain whether further instructions are necessary with a view to the qualification of officers for duties with the Royal Marines under the new scheme, a committee consisting of Executive, Engineer and Marine officers has been appointed to consider the matter. Their enquiry has only just been completed, and their report has not yet been laid before the Board. It is not, therefore, possible to indicate the nature of their recommendations.

The education of Naval Cadets under the system introduced in 1903 is making satisfactory progress. The first batch of cadets will complete their educational course on shore, and leave Dartmouth for training in a seagoing cruiser after next summer term. The most recent reports from the officers and masters at Dartmouth confirm in a remarkable way the anticipations formed of the present method of selection of candidates, which has settled down from being a tentative experiment into a permanent system. The cost of the thorough education given at the two Naval Colleges obliges the Admiralty to call upon the parents for a substantial contribution towards it; but in the case of officers of the Navy and Army who can show that the fees paid are a serious burden, a large reduction is made in the charges. The question of finding means to extend this privilege of reduction of fees to such other parents as may need it deserves careful consideration. One Exhibition for this purpose has already been provided through the generosity of a private donor. Possibly county or other public authorities may be led to follow this example and that of the Argyll Fund, founded for the benefit of Scottish boys, and provide for naval cadets who belong to their several districts.

I have already stated that the number of men has been reduced by 1,000. The present number of seamen borne is in excess of requirements, while the number of stokers is still less than is needed for manning the Fleet. The entries of boys have therefore been continued at the same reduced total as last year, viz.:—1,500, and this has permitted of the entry of a large portion of the stokers required to make good the deficit. As the seamen drop to the required strength, the stokers will be increased. This process, however, takes time, as notwithstanding the popularity of the Royal Fleet Reserve, only a limited proportion of men can be allowed to take their transfer to the Reserve before the completion of their ordinary engagements.

As compared with last year there is really a rise in Vote 1 (Pay and Wages) of 175,500*l*. Notwithstanding the reduction in numbers, this increase is inevitable and at the same time satisfactory, owing to the reduced force containing a larger proportion of mature men and higher paid ratings and also to the fact that the effect of the grant in recent years of better pay and allowances is not felt all at once. Such increases in pay are on a gradual scale, and at present the general tendency to rise is not counter-balanced by the reduction in numbers of young and first entries. A new plan of issuing clothing in kind instead of a money gratuity to new entries has involved the transfer of a sum of 116,500*l.* from Vote 1 to Vote 2 (Victualling and Clothing), and consequently the Estimates only show an increase of 59,000*l.* in the actual Vote for Wages.

The question of rating, advancement, and conditions of service of Seamen and Petty Officers has been carefully reviewed during the year, and certain proposals, having for their principal object the improvement in the position and responsibility of the Petty Officer, are now under consideration with a view to their adoption in the course of the coming financial year. At the same time it is proposed to establish a new rating of Telegraphist for working the wireless telegraph instruments, independently of the Signal branch, which has hitherto conducted those duties.

From the 1st April last a new system of training for the Royal Naval Reserve was introduced, its main feature being the substitution of modern ships at the Home Ports for shore batteries as the place for carrying out drill and training. By the end of 1906 some 1,300 men and 186 officers accepted service under the new system. Recruiting for the Royal Naval Reserve was reopened in November, and in the coming year it is proposed to enter 1,000 seamen and stokers, sixty engine room artificers, and eighty officers. The introduction of the gratuity of 50*l.* after twenty years' service, in lieu of pension at the age of sixty, has been apparently much appreciated, as practically all the men who completed the necessary service since the 1st April, have elected to take the gratuity. The Commanding Officers of His Majesty's ships in which the Royal Naval Reserve men have been embarked for training report satisfactorily on the men. 530 seamen and 230 stokers have been embarked for training since the 1st April, 1906, in addition to the 587 stokers who served during the manœuvres, some of whom elected to count this service in lieu of their biennial training.

In the spring of 1906 some 120 of the 590 men forming the Newfoundland Reserve visited England during an extended cruise on board three of His Majesty's ships. The most favourable impression was created by their general appearance, and the Commodore in command of the squadron reported in high terms as to their conduct and efficiency. Good reports are received from the Colonies of the other branches of the Naval Reserve there established ; and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve at home continues to justify the high expectations which were formed of this body when first raised three years.

An inter-departmental conference is now in session to consider whether any modifications can be made in the present system of Revenue Protection and the use of the Coast Guard, with a view to reducing the cost falling upon Naval Votes. The conference has not yet concluded its deliberations, and any recommendations which may be made will receive careful consideration both from a naval manning point of view, and also from the point of view of ensuring that adequate provision is made for the life-saving services as well as revenue services.

As indicated in last year's Statement, the training of boy artificers and mechanicians has been reorganised on the new lines—the former has been concentrated at Portsmouth and Chatham, and the latter at Devonport. The placing of these training establishments under the control of an Inspecting Captain has been attended by good results, and there is every reason to believe that the scheme of training, now well established, will fulfil the expectations entertained by those who initiated the policy. Candidates of good qualifications are presenting themselves for training as mechanicians, and though a small proportion have had to be eliminated in the early stages of their training, the remainder have shown themselves fully competent to meet the demands of the instructors. It has not been possible yet to test the mechanicians who have been trained with a view to their undertaking duties in the Engine

Room, as the men who were put through the new course of training have only just been drafted to seagoing ships. The same may be said of the boy artificers. Those first entered have only just completed their four years' course, and arrangements are now being made for them to join ships for their first work as engine room artificers of the 5th class. With one or two exceptions they have passed out of the training establishments with credit.

During the past year an enquiry has been made into certain questions connected with canteens on board ship and the victualling of the Fleet. It is hoped that the result of this enquiry, when carried into effect in combination with the reforms now being carried out in the cookery arrangements of the Fleet, will remove, or at least greatly reduce certain existing shortcomings.

I am glad to be able to report a very striking increase in the improvement already begun under former Administrations in the gunnery of the Fleet. In Battle Practice, by which the gunnery organisation of the ship as a whole is tested, and which is therefore the best criterion of efficiency, the average number of hits per ship in 1906 was practically double that of the previous year, although the conditions in the last year were considerably more difficult than before, the mean range being 1,000 yards greater, and the time available for firing one minute less. In the Test of Gunlayers with heavy guns, which is a necessary preliminary to Battle Practice, but during which the efficiency of the gunlayers and guns' crews alone is tried, the average number of points obtained per man was 68·26 in 1905, as compared with 80·065 in 1906, or, comparing the percentage of hits to rounds fired, it was 56·58 against 71·12. In the Test of Gunlayers with Light Quick Firing Guns the percentage of hits to rounds fired rose from 21·63 in 1905 to 34·53 in 1906. In the Battle Practice of the torpedo boat destroyers there was a corresponding increase in efficiency, the percentage of hits to rounds fired being 20·02 in 1905 and 34·60 in 1906. It is particularly satisfactory that the improvement is general throughout the Fleet, and not by any means confined to a picked selection of crack ships. The greatest credit is due to all the officers and men who have worked together to produce this result.

Shipbuilding and Repairs.

The new construction for the year will cost 8,100,000*l.*, as against 9,235,000*l.* for 1906–7. It will include two or, unless an understanding between the naval powers be arrived at by the Hague Conference, three large armoured vessels of the *Dreadnought* type. They will be of slightly larger displacement than the *Dreadnought*, and full advantage will be taken of experience of the *Dreadnought* in carrying out the details of their construction, motive power, and armament. One fast unarmoured cruiser, five ocean-going destroyers, twelve first-class torpedo boats, and twelve submarine boats are also provided for.

7,340,618*l.* will be spent on the continuation of ships already begun; 759,382*l.* in beginning new ships; of this 107,100*l.* will be devoted to the fast unarmoured cruiser to be laid down at Pembroke, 307,482*l.* on torpedo vessels and submarines, 344,800*l.* on new large armoured vessels.

Between the 1st April, 1906, and the 31st March, 1907, the following ships will have been completed and become available for service :—

4 Battleships (*Africa, Britannia, Hibernia, Dreadnought*).

3 Armoured Cruisers (*Achilles, Cochrane, Natal*).

7 First-class Torpedo Boats.

11 Submarines.

Floating Dock for submarines.

APPENDIX II.

On the 1st April, 1907, there will be under construction :—

5 Battleships.

7 Armoured Cruisers.

8 Ocean-going Torpedo Boat Destroyers.

17 First-class Torpedo Boats.

12 Submarines.

1 Royal Yacht (*Alexandra*, expected to be ready in September next.)

The strike on the Clyde will probably cause some delay in the completion of shipbuilding in yards in that district.

H.M.S. *Dreadnought* was commissioned on the 11th December, 1906, 14 months after being first laid down. This remarkable achievement in shipbuilding reflects the greatest credit on all who were connected with the work, both at the Admiralty and at Portsmouth Dockyard. A certain amount of overtime had to be worked in order to produce this record, but there is no occasion to repeat it, and I do not intend to permit overtime to be worked in the yards in future, except in cases of pressing necessity, and then sanction on each occasion must be specially obtained.

The trials of the *Dreadnougdt* have given the highest satisfaction ; she has completed more than 7,000 miles at sea, and her passage from Gibraltar to Trinidad, a distance of 3,400 miles, was accomplished at an average rate exceeding 17 knots an hour.

A revised arrangement of working hours was adopted experimentally in the Home Dockyards on the 2nd July last. It had been the practice to work an average 48-hour week, the working week ranging from 41¼ hours in the winter to 50 hours in summer. The revised arrangement, which became a practical possibility with the introduction in the Dockyards of electric lighting on a general scale, gives a uniform week of 48 hours throughout the year. On the first four days of the week the length of the working day is 8½ hours, on Friday 9 hours, and on Saturday 5 hours. With the change to uniform hours, hourly rates became practicable as the unit of pay and have been introduced, leading to much simplification in accounting. The new time table, while popular with the employees, is not unfavourable to the Crown and, subject to some slight variations which actual experience has shown to be desirable, will shortly be established as a permanent arrangement.

Opportunity was taken during the Board of Admiralty's official visits to the Home Ports in 1906 to continue the practice adopted by former Boards of hearing petitions from the Dockyard workmen, both personal cases and representations from the various trades and grades employed. Each trade was allowed to send two delegates, one of whom might be an official of the corresponding trade union if the men so desired. My colleagues and I devoted a great deal of time to these personal interviews with the men, without the intervention of their local superior officers, and after careful subsequent examination of the statements made to us, we were able to recommend increases of wages amounting to some 60,000*l.* a year besides other concessions which did not involve expenditure. I certainly intend to continue this system of personal interviews between the members of the Board of Admiralty and the employees in the Dockyards.

I may here mention that a working arrangement has been come to for the investigation of alleged breaches of the Fair Wages Clause in Admiralty contracts, whereby any trade union which wishes to make a complaint against a contractor communicates with the Secretary of the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee. If further enquiry is needed, he consults the Admiralty, who take whatever steps after examination may prove necessary.

APPENDIX II.

The greater efficiency of our ships and their better state of repair since the introduction of the system of nucleus crews has been shown in a remarkable degree by the large proportion of ships now available for service in comparison with what was the case three years ago. In illustration of this change I give a few figures which were drawn up at my direction last month to show the relative condition of our various classes of ships at the date of my request and three years ago :—

In the third week of January, 1904, out of 60 battleships 38 were unavailable owing to need for repairs, or 63 per cent. of the whole. On 21st January, 1907, out of 51 battleships only 8, or 16 per cent., where unavailable. Of armoured cruisers, in the third week of January, 1904, of 24 vessels 8 were unavailable, 32 per cent. ; on the 21st January, 1907, out of 28 vessels 7 were unavailable,or 25 per cent. Of 84 unarmoured vessels, in the third week of January, 1904, 44 were unavailable, 52 per cent.; on 21st January, 1907, of 76 unarmoured vessels 17 were unavailable, 22½ per cent. Of 110 destroyers in the third week of January, 1940, 61 were unavailable, or 56 per cent. ; on 21st January, 1907, out of 143 destroyers 29 were unavailable, 19 per cent.

Large repairs and refits are of course necessary from time to time, but there is no doubt that a great saving has been effected by keeping all our fighting ships manned with either whole or part of their complements on board.

Arrangements have been made to transfer the Naval Yards at Halifax and Esquimalt to the Dominion Government, subject to the condition that they shall be available for the repair of His Majesty's ships, so far as their facilities admit, and that the Admiralty shall be free to resume possession at any time when naval interests require it. These conditions have been accepted generally by the Canadian Government, who are now in actual possession of Halifax Yard. The detailed arrangements necessitated by the transfer are in process of adjustment between the Admiralty and the Dominion Government.

Distribution of the Fleet.

A further development of the redistribution of the Fleet, in continuance of the policy instituted under Lord Selborne, and explained by him in his Memorandum of 6th December, 1904, has recently been resolved upon by the Board of Admiralty. The redistribution of 1904 permitted of a sufficient concentration of personnel to man all fighting ships in Home waters with nucleus crews, amounting to two-fifths of their full complement, and also to provide on shore at each Home Port a balance of men always ready to man two armoured ships. The further distribution of naval strength now resolved upon will provide a considerable increase in all nucleus crews of ships in the first fighting line, and the complete manning of squadrons of six battleships and six armoured cruisers which will not leave Home waters. These twelve ships together with forty-eight destroyers with full crews, some small cruisers, and the requisite auxiliaries will be concentrated at the Nore, and will do their practices and sea service in the North Sea, and will be constantly ready for any emergency. The nucleus crew system will thus be maintained and strengthened in the constitution of the Home Fleet. The crews of the vessels at the other ports must fluctuate, according to the demands made for the provision of foreign reliefs and for other causes, but will not, except in the small cruisers, fall below three-fifths ; more often there will be an excess over this number.

The term " in reserve " will no longer be applicable ; all seagoing fighting vessels in the Home Ports, not belonging to other fleets or squadrons or appropriated for training purposes or local defence, belong to the Home Fleet and will be able to complete to full crew at a few hours' notice. Certain vessels of older date have hitherto been described as " in special reserve " ; in future such vessels will be kept fit for service and provided with crews sufficient to keep their machinery in good order and the ships ready for the duties required of them. I should explain that the Home Fleet is still in process of development and that it will be some time before it can reach its full strength.

APPENDIX II.

As the fleets at Home will continue to be combined for war under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet, the Channel, Atlantic, and Home Fleets will carry out periodic peace exercises together under his command at such times and places as the Admiralty may direct. As indicated in the Admiralty minute of 23rd October, 1906, the Fifth Cruiser Squadron (the Nore Division) of armoured cruisers will be detached for exercises with the Channel and other Fleets as desirable.

Considerable administrative improvement is expected to result from the organisation of the Home Fleet. It has been necessary heretofore to deal separately with the distribution and arrangement of each of the existing Reserve Divisions. The position of the Rear Admiral in Command of Torpedo Craft and Submarines has been somewhat anomalous, inasmuch as he has been under the orders of more than one Senior Officer. The administrative command of all these divisions and vessels being now centralised in the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet, a far better organisation should be achieved than has been possible with a divided responsibility. His headquarters are at Sheerness and he will occupy the house vacated by the transfer of the residence of the Commander-in-Chief at the Nore from Sheerness to Chatham.

The status of the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet and that of the Flag Officers and vessels under his orders will be similar to that of the Flag Officers and vessels of the Channel and Atlantic Fleets when they visit the Home Ports; that is to say, for the time being they come under the command of the Senior Officer present, but that Senior Officer will not interfere with the administration and orders of the officers in command. The Home Fleet in no way interferes with the role of the Channel and Atlantic Fleets, except in the event of a totally unforeseen outbreak of war during their absence from Home waters; they will still occupy the principal fighting position.

The first squadron of armoured cruisers under the command of Rear-Admiral G. Neville, C.V.O., will visit Hampton Roads in the early summer on the occasion of the opening of the Jamestown Exhibition by the President of the United States of America.

The fleet at sea will begin the new year without its most distinguished and capable figure through the termination of the appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet of Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, V.C., G.C.B., one of the ablest and most trusted commanders the Navy has had in recent years. Sir Arthur Wilson has a fine record of service as a most efficient officer at sea, in the battlefield on shore, as an administrator at the Admiralty, where he was Controller of the Navy, and finally as the Commander-in-Chief for six years of the most important of His Majesty's fleets. In spite of the sound and wise demand for young Flag Officers, there are still occasions when the whole Navy regrets the inevitable operation of the age rule, and it is a notable one indeed when Sir Arthur Wilson brings to a close his last command afloat.

I append the usual statement of work done in the Department.

TWEEDMOUTH.

23rd February, 1907.

APPENDIX II.

STATEMENT OF WORK 1907–8, &c.

CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE FLEETS.

Mediterranean.

The battleship squadron, formerly consisting of eight ships of the *Formidable* class, has been reduced by the recent withdrawal of H.M.S. *Bulwark*. The *London* will also be withdrawn after the Lagos Manœuvres, and with the *Bulwark* will join the Home Fleet.

The same three Second Class Cruisers of the *Talbot* class have remained attached to the Battle squadron.

In the Third Cruiser Squadron the *Bacchante* replaced the *Leviathan* as flagship.

North America and West Indies
(*Fourth Cruiser Squadron*).

In this squadron the Armoured Cruisers *Euryalus*, *Hogue*, and *Sutlej* have replaced the four Protected Cruisers of the *Edgar* class. The *Indefatigable* has been employed continuously on service in the West Indies. The Protected Cruiser *Brilliant* was employed during the fishery season in Newfoundland waters : after a winter visit to the West Indies she is carrying out a cruise down the East coast of South America, returning to Newfoundland in May.

China.

The six cruisers in the China Squadron have remained unaltered, with the exception of the *Monmouth*, which replaced the *Andromeda*. The *Bedford* is about to relieve the *Diadem*.

Two sloops, three gunboats, and ten shallow draught steamers have been engaged on river work.

Australia.

No alteration has taken place in this squadron.

The *Cambrian*, accompanied by the *Flora* from the China station, cruised on the West Coast of North and South America and amongst the Pacific Islands during the Spring and Summer of 1906.

East Indies and the Cape of Good Hope.

The only change in the East Indies Squadron has been the relief of the *Fox* by the *Highflyer*. The *Hyacinth* is about to relieve the *Hermes* as flagship, and the *Hermes* will relieve the *Crescent* as flagship of the Cape Squadron. The *Terpsichore* has returned from the Cape, without relief.

The East Indies Squadron will shortly be placed under the command of a Commodore 1st Class, and that officer and the East Indies station will come in war time under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the Cape station.

Atlantic Fleet, including Second Cruiser Squadron.

Throughout the year the ships of the *Majestic* class have been gradually withdrawn from this Fleet and replaced by the new ships of the *King Edward VII.* class as they were completed. It is now intended to transfer the eight ships of the *King Edward VII.* class to the Channel Fleet and to reconstitute the Battle squadron of the Atlantic Fleet with the five ships of the *Duncan* class (now in the Channel Fleet) and the *Albion*.

The three smaller cruisers attached to this squadron have not been changed.

The Second Cruiser Squadron affiliated to the Altantic Fleet has been reduced from six ships to four, two cruisers having been withdrawn for service in the Home Fleet.

Channel Fleet, including First Cruiser Squadron.

In June last the *Montagu* attached to this Fleet was wrecked off Lundy Island. The remaining sixteen ships, of which the Battle squadron has been composed, have throughout the year belonged to the *Duncan*, *Canopus*, *Majestic*, and *Swiftsure* classes. It is intended to reduce the number of battleships to fourteen and to alter the composition of the squadron by transferring to it the eight ships of the new *King Edward VII.* class, the other six ships being the *Swiftsure*, *Triumph*, *Illustrious*, *Jupiter*, *Ocean*, and *Vengeance*.

The three cruisers attached to the Battle squadron have remained unchanged.

The First Cruiser Squadron has remained unaltered, but it will shortly be reduced from six to four Armoured Cruisers.

Torpedo Craft in Home Waters.

Three Scouts have been added for service with the three permanent destroyer flotillas, and the number of destroyers in each flotilla has been brought up to twelve boats worked in three divisions of four boats each. From the 5th March, another flotilla of twelve destroyers with a Scout flying the broad pendant of a Commodore (D) will be added to the permanent flotillas. The *Sapphire* has been retained as flagship and parent ship for these destroyers, and H.M.S. *Tyne* has been detailed in addition to H.M.S. *Sapphire II.* as a depot ship. The first four of the new type of torpedo boat (formerly called coastal destroyers) have been placed under the orders of the Admiral (D) for experiment. The destroyers at the three Home Ports have been reorganised. A depot ship has been added to each Port, and two Scouts have been added for service with the destroyer flotilla at Portsmouth and the Nore, and one Scout with the Devonport flotilla. The flotillas at each of the three Ports consist of twenty-four destroyers (with a spare boat) worked in six divisions of four boats each, and the boats have been arranged homogeneously to the greatest possible extent.

Special attention has been given to the organisation of the submarine craft, the numbers of which have been considerably increased.

The Admiral (D) who is in command of all destroyer craft and submarine craft in Home waters will be placed under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet.

Home Fleet.

The Home Fleet will be constituted by April next as follows :—

BATTLESHIPS.

Nore :—

With full complement.
- *Dreadnought* (flag of Commander-in-Chief).
- *Bulwark* (flag of Rear-Admiral).
- *London*.
- *Magnificent*.
- *Majestic*.
- *Victorious*.

Portsmouth :—

Prince George (flag of Rear-Admiral).
Glory.
Goliath.
Canopus.

Devonport :—

Empress of India (flag of Rear-Admiral).
(To be replaced by *Cæsar* in May.)
Mars.
Hannibal.

FIRST CLASS CRUISERS.

Nore :—

(5th Cruiser Squadron) :
With full complement.
Leviathan (flag of Rear-Admiral).
Cochrane.
Duke of Edinburgh.
Achilles.
Natal.
Warrior (to join in May).

Portsmouth :—

Cressy.
Berwick.
Essex.
Argonaut.
Terrible.
Ariadne.
Diadem.
Spartiate (to join in May).

Devonport :—

Carnarvon.
Donegal.
Cumberland.
Cornwall.
Niobe.
Europa.
Andromeda.
Amphitrite.

SMALLER CRUISERS.

Nore :—

Dido
Vindictive.
Charybdis.

Portsmouth :—

Gladiator.
Eclipse.
Fox.

Devonport :—

Doris.

Special Service vessels, torpedo craft, and Fleet auxiliaries are additional to this list.

APPENDIX II.

Coast Guard and Fishing Service Vessels.

The *Argus*, *Thrush*, *Halcyon*, and *Leda* have been employed during the year in the North Sea on fishing duties.

The *Julia* has been in the English Channel; the *Ringdove*, *Daisy*, and *Hussar* in Scottish waters; and the *Skipjack* on the south-west coast of Ireland.

The *Squirrel* has been mainly in the North Sea, and for part of the year in the Moray Firth and in the south-east district of the English Channel.

The *Fanny* has been partly in the English Channel and partly on the south-west coast of Ireland.

Special Visits.

In July H.M.S. *Antrim* visited Antwerp.
In August the Particular Service Squardon visited Sweden and Norway.
H.M.S. *Dominion* visited Canada in August and September.

Manœuvres.

Torpedo craft exercises were carried out in Home waters in January and February, 1906.

Four Scouts, sixty-four destroyers, and forty-two torpedo boats took part under the directions of the Admiral (D).

Combined strategical manœuvres were carried out at Lagos from the 13th February to the 1st March, 1906, by the Channel, Mediterranean, and Atlantic Fleets and First, Second, and Third Cruiser Squadrons, making together a force of twenty-nine battleships and eighteen cruisers.

The Grand Manœuvres, from 12th June to 2nd July, consisted of three periods, viz.:—

(1) Test of arrangements for mobilisation in sudden emergency and of preparedness and safety of the Home Ports against attack.

(2) Period of tactical exercises.

(3) Test of arrangements for the defence of trade against a hostile attack.

With a few exceptions, the whole of the Channel, Mediterranean, Atlantic Fleets, the four Cruiser Squadrons, and the Reserve Divisions, including destroyers, torpedo boats, and submarines, took part, making a total of 329 vessels.

Combined exercises of the Channel, Mediterranean, and Atlantic Fleets, and the four Cruiser Squadrons, have again taken place at Lagos in February, 1907.

PERSONNEL.

Officers.

The position of signalling officers has been defined by the institution of regular courses in the signal school, and officers who qualify will be distinguished by the placing of a symbol against their names in the Navy List. In the case of large fleets an allowance will be payable under certain conditions to an officer who may not combine signalling duties with those of flag lieutenant.

The scale of allowances to specialist officers serving in flag ships has been revised being placed on a uniform system, and at the same time the Executive Commander has been included among the officers entitled to an allowance.

APPENDIX II.

The regulations governing the service of Chaplains, R.N., have been further revised, and a rule has been laid down that no candidate should be placed on the established list without a preliminary period of four years' service in the Fleet. Gratuities on a certain fixed scale are payable to Chaplains, who withdraw after short periods of service.

The organisation of the new system of War Courses has been further matured, and the building in Portsmouth Dockyard, which at one time was used as the School of Naval Architecture, has been now made the headquarters of the War Course College. A school ship has been attached to the college with a view to the better carrying out of the system of instruction pursued in the War Courses.

An inquiry was made last year into the best means of giving instruction in naval matters to the Royal Garrison Artillery, with a view to more efficient co-operation in time of war. As a result it has been arranged that lectures by naval officers shall be given from time to time to officers of the Royal Garrison Artillery at Portsmouth and Shoeburyness; the gunnery and torpedo schools have been placed in direct communication with the Army School of Gunnery; officers of the two services will attend reciprocally the Naval War Courses and the Army School of Gunnery and naval and coast artillery gun practices; and Garrison Artillery officers will be allowed to accompany torpedo craft when engaged in manœuvres off defended harbours, while naval officers will be permitted to be present in the defending batteries on these occasions.

The established system of entry and selection of cadets has been followed systematically throughout the year. The course of study at Osborne was interrupted seriously in the summer term by an epidemic of infectious complaints common to boys of youthful age; at Dartmouth, where the cadets are two years older, there has been no serious outbreak of disease of any kind. It has been decided to start building at once a hospital for infectious cases at Osborne.

The college at Dartmouth will receive its last quota of cadets in May next, and thenceforward both colleges will be in full working order.

In September, the first cadets who join under the new system of training will pass out and be embarked for their six months' training afloat in a first-class cruiser to be specially commissioned for the purpose.

Men.

The question of rating, advancement, and conditions of service of seamen and petty officers has been carefully reviewed during the year, and certain proposals, having for their principal object the improvement in the position and responsibility of the petty officer, are now under consideration with a view to their adoption in the course of the coming financial year.

The training of boy artificers and mechanicians has been re-adjusted. The former are now trained at the establishments at Portsmouth and Chatham, while the training of the latter is concentrated at Devonport. An inspecting captain has been appointed having his headquarters at Portsmouth, with powers of general supervision over the training of both boy artificers and mechanicians. Arrangements have also been made for the training of leading stokers under the new system at each port.

An uniform system of training Special Service Seamen has been applied to all three ports. In future these men will have a short period of special training in the ships of the Home Fleet so as better to adapt them to service on board seagoing ships. The reports of the Special Service Seamen and Special Service Stokers particularly, who were embarked during the manœuvres were satisfactory.

The seagoing training of Boys and Youths has been recently modified, advantage having been taken of the facilities offered by the re-organised Home Fleet. Boys when waiting draft either to the seagoing cruisers or to the Fleet on completing their cruiser training will be sent to the battleships and cruisers of the Home Fleet. The Youths after their preliminary training at Shotley will be sent to the Home Fleet to complete their course of training.

The training and organisation of Engine-room ratings of the Stoker branch, to which reference was made last year, has been established and is working satisfactorily. There is reason to believe that the improved prospects open to the Stoker branch have led to better recruits presenting themselves for entry.

The scheme of physical training in the Fleet has been further extended and developed. The relations of officers and others generally towards the physical training of the men under them have been defined. Ju-jitsu classes have been formed at Portsmouth experimentally, with a view to determining the desirability of introducing this exercise generally into the scheme of training of the older men. The training of Royal Marine Instructors will in future be conducted at the School of Physical Training at Portsmouth. All Marine recruits at Deal are now put through the Naval system of training.

The education and training of boys in Greenwich Hospital School has been revised with a view to the present conditions of service in the Navy, and steps have been taken to secure that a larger number of the more intelligent boys join the Seaman class.

Arrangements have been made for a more systematic course of lectures for the benefit of Seamen afloat, and for the supply of magic lanterns and slides to illustrate the subject of the lectures. A new collection of popular songs suitable for use in the Fleet has been published.

The system under which officers' servants are recruited for and serve in His Majesty's Navy has been enquired into, and various changes designed to improve their status and conditions of service, including the provision of better accommodation on board ship, are under consideration.

Recruiting during the year has been satisfactory, and no difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the full numbers required in each rating. Recruiting for Stokers has been very good, particularly among the Special Service men.

An arrangement has been made with the British Red Cross Society whereby that society will be generally recognised as the central organisation through which offers of assistance from societies and individuals in time of war should be made to the Admiralty, except as regards the services of the Members of the Auxiliary Sick Berth Reserve, which, as hitherto, will be associated with the St. John's Ambulance and St. Andrew's Ambulance Associations.

Royal Marines.

The number of Royal Marines borne on 31st December was 17452, the total strength of the corps having been fixed at 17,500.

The Royal Naval School of Music, which was established in 1903, is making steady progress. The present number of band ranks for service afloat is 1,051. Thirty-five bands under the new scheme are now embarked in H.M. ships.

Suitable Sick Quarters have been provided for the Chatham Division R.M.L.I., by the conversion of the Commandant's old house.

Considerable progress has been made with the reconstruction of the building formerly used as the Naval Hospital into barrack rooms for Royal Marines, and several of the buildings have already been taken over for use.

The arrangements referred to last year in regard to the examination of Marine officers in Military subjects while serving afloat have been found a convenience and will be continued.

During the past year Marines have been landed from the squadrons for the carrying out of field exercises in a more systematic manner, and the arrangement made in 1905, whereby the Senior Marine Officer has been given special responsibility in regard to the scheme of exercise has worked satisfactorily.

Use continues to be made of Marine officers in Naval duties on board ship, for which their experience and training qualify them.

Coast Guard.

The policy instituted last year of closing stations not required for Naval Work at which extensive repairs were required, or where the quarters were no longer suitable or available, has been continued. Thirty-five stations and detachments have been closed since 1st April 1906, and twelve more will be closed before 31st March 1907.

The entry of men (except a small number of signal ratings for War Signal stations) into the Coast Guard from the Fleet has been suspended, and the total numbers borne will be further reduced in 1907–8 to the extent of 262.

The improvement in the efficiency of the War Signal stations continues to be maintained. Arrangements have now been made that the peace and war crews of the stations are the same, and the result, as shown by the experience during the recent manœuvres, has been most satisfactory.

Royal Fleet Reserve.

The numbers of the Royal Fleet Reserve have increased from a total of 14,313 to 16,222 during the year, the total strength on the 31st December 1906 being :—

—	Class A.	Class B.	Total.
Seamen, &c.	3,326	5,622	8,948
Stokers	983	1,720	2,703
Marines	1,715	2,856	4,571
	6,024	10,198	16,222

Careful consideration has been given to proposals for facilitating the civil employment of men discharged from the Fleet to the Royal Fleet Reserve. A tentative arrangement has been made with the Marine Society for assisting men desirous of employment in the Mercantile Marine, which it is hoped may be a benefit to the men themselves and also to the Mercantile Marine.

Royal Naval Reserve.

A new system of training for Royal Naval Reserve officers and men was introduced on the 1st April 1906, under which *training* on board effective ships in commission is substituted for *drill* on board Harbour Drill ships and at shore batteries.

As a result of this, five torpedo gunboats and five Harbour Drill ships were paid off on 31st March 1906, and twenty-five Royal Naval Reserve batteries closed. The remaining four Harbour Drill ships and eight batteries will be retained for a period not exceeding five years from 1st April 1906.

APPENDIX II.

Royal Naval Reserve officers have been given the option of drilling at the remaining drill stations under the old system for five years from 1st April 1906, but on promotion they must embrace the new system.

Royal Naval Reserve men serving in the force on 1st April 1906 have been given the option of carrying out their drill at the remaining shore batteries or Harbour Drill ships during their current period of enrolment or of adopting the new system, but on re-enrolment they must embrace the new system.

The training under the new system is being carried out on board the ships of the Home Fleet, and the system has worked very satisfactorily and has advantage over the former system, both as regards efficiency and economy.

A limited number of entries of Executive Officers, Royal Naval Reserve, has been made during the year; the entry of men was suspended up to October 1906, but arrangements have now been made to resume entries of Seamen and Stoker ratings to a limited extent under the new system.

About 600 Royal Naval Reserve Firemen were embarked for the manœuvres as part complement of ships employed, and satisfactory reports were received as to their conduct and ability from the Commanding Officers of the ships in which they were employed.

The strength of the Royal Naval Reserve (Home) on 31st December 1906 was :—

		Total.
Executive Officers	1,524	1,900
Commissioned Engineer Officers	299	
Warrant Engineers	77	
Engine Room Artificers	528	25,267
Seaman Ratings	18,556	
Stoker Ratings	6,183	
		27,167

On that date 428 Executive Officers, Royal Naval Reserve, on the Active List had already undergone 12 months' Naval training, and were in receipt of training fees. In addition 65 Executive Officers, Royal Naval Reserve, are now undergoing 12 months' Naval training.

The Colonial Naval Reserves have been satisfactorily reported on during the year. Steps are being taken to improve the training of the Colonial crews of certain ships on the Australian station under the agreement.

The strength of the Colonial Royal Naval Reserve is as follows :—

—	Number.	Date.
Australasia	362	1st November 1906.
Newfoundland	590	31st November 1906.
Malta	400	1st January 1907.

There are 84 Assistant Paymasters in the Special Reserve of Accountant Officers.

APPENDIX II.

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

No increase has been made in this Reserve during the current year, and the strength of the Force on 31st December was as follows :—

	Complement.	Borne 31.12.06.	
Permanent Staff :—			
Officers	7	7	70
Petty Officers and Men	63	63	
Royal Naval Volnnteers :—			
Officers	186	168	3,735
Honorary Officers	—	20	
Petty Officers and Men	4,122	3,547	

During the year opportunities have been given to the Naval Volunteers to embark for periods of from 14 to 28 days in ships engaged in the manœuvres, and ships of the Reserve Divisions, and about 980 officers and men took advantage of this.

The reports on officers and men received from the Captains of the ships in which the Volunteers have been trained continue to be satisfactory.

In addition to embarkation in H.M. ships, arrangements have been made for special courses of instruction in Naval duties for Surgeons, R.N.V.R., at Haslar Hospital, and for R.N.V.R. Accountant Officers in London. Two Surgeons, R.N.V.R., have satisfactorily passed through the course at Haslar up to this date.

Particular attention is being paid to instruction in signalling, and the attention of the Volunteers has been called to the importance of every man acquiring some trade or special qualification (*e.g.* signalling) which will enhance his usefulness to the Naval service.

A considerable proportion of the men are already acquainted with trades (*e.g.* electricians, armourers, shipwrights, &c.), which are required in His Majesty's ships, and arrangements have been made for men holding such qualifications to undergo a short training to obtain a certificate of competency in these trades.

Thirty-two Royal Naval Volunteers have qualified for these certificates, including 14 as Engine Room Artificers.

Harbour Drill ships (recently used by the Royal Naval Reserve) have been lent to the Tyneside Division and Dundee Companies, respectively, and Drill halls (also recently used by the Royal Naval Reserve) have been leased to the Brighton and Carnarvon Companies. Fine new premises have been erected by the Clyde Division in Glasgow.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

Northern Estates—Farms.

Considerable progress has been made in putting the recently acquired property at Priorsdale into a satisfactory condition as regards sanitation, water supply, and repairs generally.

The season has, on the whole, been a favourable one, and all the farms are let.

Greenwich Estate.

The improvements to the Market which include a new roof and repaving throughout, conversion of the retail shops into wholesale warehouses, and provision of stabling accommodation are now complete.

New byelaws authorising the holding of a market on each weekday have been prepared and are awaiting the final approval of the Local Government Board.

Some further property in Church Street, the condition of which was prejudicial to the market area, has been acquired, and is now in course of demolition preparatory to rebuilding.

The revenue from the estate continues to show a steady increase, and there are no important premises vacant.

Royal Hospital School.

The standard of efficiency has been maintained, and the highest possible educational grant again earned.

Painted Hall.

The security of the roof of the Painted Hall having been called in question in consequence of the age and condition of the timbers, Mr. T. G. Jackson, R.A., was called upon to examine and report upon its condition.

The necessary work will, it is estimated, entail an expenditure of about 1,000*l*.

Mr. Jackson has suggested a method by which it can be carried out without endangering Thornhill's celebrated ceiling, and it is proposed to undertake it in the course of 1907.

ORDNANCE.

The amount asked for under Vote 9 for 1907–8 is 2,348,700*l*. against 2,986,000*l*. voted for 1906–7, or a decrease of 637,300*l*.

Provision has been made to complete the guns for the vessels included in the 1905–6 programme and to advance those for the ships laid down in 1906–7, and for the authorised outfits and reserves of ammunition, torpedoes, and other Naval Ordnance stores for new programme ships.

Progress in the manufacture and supply of guns and other warlike stores during the year has been satisfactory. The guns have been ready to be placed on board ships building as required.

A system of examining and proving heavy guns at contractors' works has been inaugurated with good results. This system will be continued during 1907–8, and if it is successful it will be of great advantage, in time of emergency, that the guns can be sent direct from the works to their destination without the necessity of passing through Woolwich Arsenal.

Inspection and Proof.

On the recommendation of a joint Admiralty and War Office Committee, steps have been taken to associate Naval officers with the work of inspection and proof of Ordnance stores, and with the scientific experimental Ordnance work carried out at Woolwich and Shoeburyness. It is anticipated that the Naval service will derive great benefit from this step, and that the experience gained by Naval officers will be of considerable value.

Guns and Mountings.

The pattern of 12-inch gun mounted in the *Dreadnought* will also form the armament of the battleships of the 1906–7 programme. For the battleships of the 1907–8 programme an improved design of gun has been accepted.

The experiments having for their object improvements in the appliances for training elevating guns alluded to in last year's statement have given very promising results and are being continued.

The electrically worked mountings referred to last year are nearly completed and trials will shortly be carried out.

The alterations in the design of 12-inch gun mountings embodied in the *Dreadnought's* turrets have proved generally successful.

Sights.

Re-sighting of the turret and 6-inch guns of the Fleet has been proceeded with, though the turret sights were somewhat delayed through the trial of a novel proposal. The newest types of sights actually supplied have proved to be very successful.

Improvements in the method of sighting the guns of torpedo boat destroyers are being carried out.

Fire Control.

The purchase of electric instruments, cables, rangefinders, and other accessories for fitting the approved scheme of control into battleships and cruisers, has been completed.

Instructional Armaments.

Portsmouth.—Two dummy turrets have been completed at Whale Island for the instruction of turret ratings in shooting and drill.

H.M.S. *Revenge* has been appropriated to the *Excellent* as gunnery tender to carry out instruction in shooting at long range, and this ship also carries out the training of the turret shooting ratings.

Chatham-Sheerness.—Approval has been given to begin construction of the necessary gun batteries and instructional sheds at Chatham with a view to removing the Gunnery School from Sheerness to Chatham.

Devonport.—The various gun batteries and buildings for the new Gunnery School are in course of construction.

Target Practice.

The supply of new pattern targets has been made general.

Trials are being carried out with a view to further improvements.

Revised regulations for the Heavy and Light Gunlayers' Tests and for Battle Practice in both ships and destroyers were issued to the Fleet early last year, and the returns show a very marked improvement in the shooting.

Approval has been given to increase the annual allowance of ammunition for ships in the newly constituted Home Fleet, and regulations have been framed to govern the practices.

Diving.

A committee has been formed to investigate the subject of diving in deep water.

The experiments are not complete, but from interim reports it is anticipated that considerable advance will be made in this matter.

APPENDIX II.

Torpedo Tubes.

Torpedo discharges of an improved design are being fitted in ships and destroyers now building.

Mining.

Important changes and progress in this branch of the service have been made both as regards the mines and the means of laying or removing them.

Wireless Telegraphy.

Wireless telegraphy continues to make good progress, and its increased efficiency and utility have been well demonstrated during the various manœuvres and exercises which have taken place. Extensive experiments have been carried out with very successful results. The majority of the ships of the Fleet have now been supplied with the latest apparatus.

Searchlights.

Good progress has been made in increasing their efficiency; larger and more powerful searchlights have been introduced.

Ordnance Depots.

Good progress has been made in the provision of increased storage for cartridges and projectiles at the Royal Naval Ordnance Depots, Lodge Hill, Upnor, Priddy's Hard, and Bull Point.

The new magazines at Gibraltar are nearing completion, and the Admiralty and War Office are considering the question of separating the Naval and Military Ordnance duties at that place, so that when the new accommodation is ready for use, the Admiralty shall be responsible for the Naval Ordnance duties in the same way as at Home depots and Malta.

It has so far been impracticable to effect separation of the Ordnance duties at Hong Kong, but the future arrangements at that place are now under consideration by the Admiralty and War Office.

NEW CONSTRUCTION.

Battleships.

The *Dreadnought* has been completed, passed through all her trials successfully and commissioned.

The three later ships of the *King Edward VII.* class, viz., *Britannia, Africa,* and *Hibernia,* have been completed, and passed satisfactorily through all their trials, attaining a speed of about 18¾ knots at full power. They have been commissioned, so that the eight vessels of this class are now on service.

Three ships of an improved *Dreadnought* type have been laid down, viz. :—the *Bellerophon* at Portsmouth, *Tèmèraire* at Devonport, and *Superb* at Elswick

The *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon* have both been launched, the machinery is mostly in position on board, and the general progress is satisfactory.

Armoured Cruisers.

The four later ships of the *Duke of Edinburgh* class have successfully passed through all their steam trials, reaching a speed of about 23¼ knots. The *Cochrane, Natal,* and *Achilles* will have been delivered by the contractors complete and ready for commission by about the end of this financial year; the fourth vessel, *Warrior,* will be completed at Pembroke Dockyard early in 1907–8. These four ships are sister vessels to the *Duke of Edinburgh* ad *Black Prince,* except that four 50-calibre 7.5-inch guns are carried in single turrets on the upper deck, in lieu of the ten 6-inch guns in battery on the main deck in the first two ships of the class.

Two of the armoured cruisers of the *Minotaur* class have been launched during the year, the *Minotaur* at Devonport and *Shannon* at Chatham, and are now being prepared for their trials. The third ship of the class, *Defence,* will be launched at Pembroke in April.

The three large armoured cruisers *Inflexible, Indomitable,* and *Invincible* were laid down in February, March and April, 1906, respectively, and have made good progress being nearly ready for launching.

Unarmoured Cruiser.

A design of a fast unarmoured cruiser has been prepared, and the ship will be laid down at Pembroke early in the next financial year. In this design special attention has been given to her capabilities for accompanying destroyers and acting as a parent ship in addition to carrying out the peace duties of a light cruiser.

Destroyers and Torpedo Boats.

Four First Class torpedo boats (called coastal destroyers in last year's statement) have been delivered. It is expected that three more will be delivered before the end of the financial year.

The remaining five of these vessels are well advanced, and will probably be delivered during the next few months.

Eighteen designs (including alternatives) for the twelve First Class torpedo boats and two ocean-going destroyers provided for in the current Navy Estimates have been examined and orders provisionally placed.

Other Vessels.

The building of His Majesty's Yacht *Alexandra* has been advanced, and she will be completed during next financial year.

The fitting out of the Fleet repair ship *Cyclops* will be completed early in the next financial year.

One steam hopper dredger barge for Devonport, three 100-ton water lighters for Home Ports, three 50-ton Naval Ordnance barges, one 1,000-ton coal depot, and four 250-ton coaling lighters have been completed. Fifteen horse boats, one steam mooring lighter and tug for Devonport, and one mooring lighter for Sheerness will be completed by the end of March, 1907, or soon after.

One paddle tug for Gibraltar and six 20-ton ammunition barges now being built will be completed during 1907–8.

Submarines.

The last vessels of the B. class, ordered in 1904–5, have been completed and delivered, and are now on active service.

Four of the eleven C. class boats, ordered in 1905–6, have been completed and delivered, and it is anticipated that four more will be completed by 31st March next.

Five more boats of the C. class have been ordered, and these boats will be well advanced by 31st March next; two boats of the same class have been laid down at Chatham.

General.

The arrangements on board H.M. ships for cooking, bread-making, sanitation, ventilation, warming, washing, lighting, dealing with wounded, coaling, working torpedo net defence, etc., have been improved and extended during the past financial year, and workshops, with the necessary machine tools, for armourers and electricians have been provided in many ships.

MACHINERY AND BOILERS.

Four of the older First Class torpedo boats have been re-boilered with water-tube boilers in lieu of the locomotive type originally fitted, and have successfully carried out their trials.

In all the vessels at present under construction, with the single exception of the *Warrior*, which will shortly be finished, complete installations of water-tube boilers have been fitted.

Large tube boilers of the "Babcock and Wilcox" or "Yarrow" type have been fitted in battleships and First Class cruisers, and various types of small tube boilers are being fitted in destroyers.

Reserve sets of auxiliary machinery have been purchased during this year following the practice of previous years; by the provision of these engines, etc., it is anticipated that the time taken to replace breakdowns to these small but important engines will be much reduced, as the stock is now practically complete, and is typical for the various classes of ships.

The present capacity of electric—generating machinery of the older classes of ships is gradually being extended in order to cope with the larger application of electric motors and other appliances; the installation of this machinery in vessels under construction is also being increased consquent on the larger number of auxiliary engines, fans, and motors not being driven by electrical power.

Turbine Propelling Machinery.

During the present financial year several vessels fitted with this type of propelling machinery have successfully completed their contract trials.

The largest vessel completed during the present year, the *Dreadnought*, is fitted with turbine propelling machinery. This vessel completed her contract trials without a hitch, the trials being highly satisfactory.

On the higher powers the turbine engines proved much more economical than reciprocating engines, and, although more uneconomical at low powers, an advantage of turbine engines is also the lesser boiler power required; in the case of the *Dreadnought* it would have been necessary to provide one-sixth more boiler power had the vessel been fitted with reciprocating engines.

It may be remarked that the turbine installation in this vessel is the highest power yet completed in any vessel, either naval or mercantile.

The results obtained in the *Dreadnought* and in the other turbine-propelled vessels which have been completed this year fully justify the adoption of this type of propelling machinery for H.M. ships, and this policy is being continued in all war vessels of this year's programme.

Repair Ships.

The *Assistance* has been thoroughly overhauled and repaired since grounding, and the *Cyclops*, a ship now being fitted up, will shortly be in full commission. They are fitted in a very complete manner and are capable of executing repairs of considerable magnitude to any vessel, besides which they are fitted to act as distilling vessels. Steps are also being taken by the purchase and fitting of workshop machines and appliances to convert the *Aquarius*, at present a distilling vessel, into a repair ship.

Ice-making Machinery.

Improved installations of ice-making and cold-storage machinery have been fitted in all the more recent vessels.

WORK AT THE DOCKYARDS.

Two submarine boats have been begun at Chatham Dockyard, but as these are the first vessels of the class to be constructed in H.M. Dockyards, rapid progress is not arranged for.

Satisfactory progress is being made with the work of refitting ships provided for under the heading of "Large Repairs," and, notwithstandng the fact that several important and unexpected items under this heading have had to be undertaken, it is anticipated that the original programme will be approximately realised.

Owing to the nature of the programme requirements, it was found necessary, during the early part of the financial year 1906–7, to dispense with the services of some of the workmen employed at Chatham and Pembroke, so as to preserve a proper working balance between the men of different trades. Since that time, however, no important discharges on reduction have taken place, but minor adjustments in the numbers of the various trades have been, and are being, effected in accordance with the demand of the work in hand and in prospect.

As indicated in the "Memorandum explanatory of recent and forthcoming changes in the administration of His Majesty's Dockyards in the United Kingdom," published on the 1st August last (Cd. 2861), the question of the adequacy of the pay of the various classes of workmen in His Majesty's Dockyards has been carefully reviewed. It was decided to grant various concessions both as regards conditions of service and remuneration, which will entail an estimated ultimate additional liability of 60,000*l*. per annum.

The work of installing electric light and power in the Dockyards and other Naval Establishments is approaching completion. The new generating stations at Portsmouth, Devonport, Pembroke, and Chatham Dockyards are now is active operation, and are supplying current for general use, while connections to the supply system are being made as the various works are completed.

The installations at Gibraltar and the Cape of Good Hope are running, but extension work in connection therewith is in hand at each Yard, and an extension is also in progress at Pembroke.

The generating station at Sheerness, which was held in abeyance for some time, is now under construction, whilst that at Malta is practically complete. Work in connection with the station at Hong Kong is in hand, and steps are being taken to provide the necessary machinery.

The replacement of obsolete machinery in the Yard workshops which has been in progress for the last three years is now nearly complete, and the shops generally are now considered to be practically up-to-date. Replacements and conversion of the lifting and hauling appliances of the Yards are also in progress.

APPENDIX II.

LARGE REPAIRS.

The following is a list of the principal works under this heading which have been, or will be, completed during the financial year 1906–7 :—

Battleships :—

Hannibal.
Royal Sovereign.
Albion.

Armoured Cruisers :—

Bedford.
Donegal.
Leviathan (practically complete).

Protected Cruisers :—

Amphitrite.
Ariadne (practically complete).
Bonaventure.
Edgar.
Hyacinth.

Sloops :—

Fantome. } Fitted for Surveying Service.
Merlin. }

Repair Ships :—

Assistance.
Aquarius.

The details of the repairs and refits proposed to be carried out in 1907–8 will, as usual, appear in the programme portion of the Navy Estimates. The most important items are given below :—

Battleships :—

Canopus.
Goliath.
Glory.
Dominion.

Armoured Cruisers :—

Berwick.
Cornwall.
Cumberland.

Protected Cruisers :—

Andromeda.
Blake.
Blenheim.
Diadem.
Fox.
Gibraltar.
Hawke.
Niobe.

Auxiliaries :—

Hecla.
Leander.
Tyne.
Vulcan.

NEW WORKS.

Works Provided in Estimates 1906–7.

Cape of Good Hope.—The accommodation for Police has been completed. The Hospital and Sanatorium will be finished by the end of the year.

Chatham.—The improvement and extension of the Dockyard Water Supply, and the conversion of Melville Hospital into Marine Barracks, are practically completed. The residence for the Commander-in-Chief has been completed, and is in occupation. Progress is being made with the reconstruction of the side walls of Upnor entrance. It has been decided to defer the River Training Works at Hoo Ness.

Deal.—The new canteen at the East Barracks is practically complete.

Gibraltar.—The additional accommodation at the Hospital, and the extension of the jetty at Rosia Bay (Victualling Yard), will be finished in 1907–8.

Greenwich Royal Naval College.—Progress is being made with the renewal of roofs of the main blocks of this building, which is rented from Greenwich Hospital.

Hong Kong.—The torpedo range will be completed in 1907–8.

Malta.—The renewal of the wharf walls in French Creek, and the new buildings connected with the hydraulic dock, are practically complete. The scheme for the renewal of the wharf walls in Dockyard Creek has been reduced, and the work will be finished in 1906–7. The reservoir at Luca, torpedo stores at Calcara Creek, and the torpedo range will, it is anticipated, be completed in 1907–8.

Plymouth.—The railways, North and South Yards, the new buoy house and the new machine shop, South Yard, will be finished in 1906–7. The new jetty and railways, South Yard, the renewal and strengthening of the girders and stanchions for traveller, North Yard, and the widening of the drill shed at the Royal Naval Barracks will be completed in 1907–8. The improvements and alterations, and the wards for lunatics and prisoners at the Royal Naval Hospital, are finished.

Portland.—The repairs to the head of the breakwater are being proceeded with as necessary. The berthing for torpedo boat destroyers is practically finished, and the reconstruction of the inner arm of Camber jetty will be completed within the financial year.

Portsmouth.—The lengthening of No. 5 Dock is practically completed ; the quarters for Sub-lieutenants at Whale Island are occupied. The reconstruction of the entrance to No. 3 Dock, the extension of the chemical laboratory, and the alteration to the Dockyard boundary will be finished in 1906–7. The new steam factory, the improvement of shipbuilding facilities, and the office extension at Whale Island are nearing completion, and will be finished in 1907–8. The extension of the Mold Loft floor, the lengthening of No. 15 Dock, the reconstruction of six flats and two staircases at Haslar Hospital, and the additional class rooms and libraries at the *Britannia*, Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, will also, it is anticipated, be completed in 1907–8. The scheme for the new lock is now being considered, and the work will be begun in the ensuing financial year.

Woolwich.—The additional railway facilities, protection against abnormal tides, and quarters at Plumstead are being proceeded with by the War Department.

Accommodation on Shore for Boys' Training Establishments.—The training establishment at Shotley Point (Harwich) is virtually completed, with the exception of a new swimming bath, which will be finished in 1907–8.

The principal new works provided for in 1907–8 are :—

Bermuda.—House for hydraulic engine and boiler, etc.
Harwich (*Shotley Point*).—Additional hospital accommodation.
Haulbowline.—Lengthening dock.
Hong Kong.—New storehouses.
Portsmouth.—Foundations for 160-ton crane.

Osborne, R.N. College. New Infectious Hospital.

Shoeburyness.—New three-tunnel butt.

Progress under Naval Works Act.

(a) *Enclosure and Defence of Harbours.*

Malta Breakwater.—The minor works connected with the scheme, including wharf walls and diversion of sewage, have been completed or are well in hand. Better progress is now being made with the main contract work, viz., the St. Elmo and Ricasoli breakwaters, the latter, *i.e.*, the short arm, being almost finished. The extended date for the completion of the whole of this contract is 1st October, 1908.

Gibraltar.—The commercial mole is now completed. It was originally arranged for the Gibraltar Colony to share in the use of the entire mole, but Naval requirements now necessitate the Admiralty appropriating the greater portion of it for their exclusive use.

Dover.—The Admiralty Pier extension, the reclamation, and the eastern arm are completed, with the exception of some minor works on the heads. The greater part of the South breakwater is also completed, and the necessary dredging is being proceeded with.

(b) *Adapting Naval Ports to Present Needs of Fleet.*

Deepening Harbours and Approaches.—The whole of the work provided for in this item has now been finished, with the exception of the contract dredging at Plymouth and Haulbowline, which is almost completed. Provision is made in Vote 10, 1907–8, for working Admiralty plant engaged upon the special dredging still remaining to be carried out at Plymouth and Portsmouth.

Keyham Dockyard Extension.—The works under the main contracts are practically completed, and the new Docks, Locks, and Basins are in use. Some of the buildings are in course of construction, and arrangements are being made for the erection of the remaining buildings.

Gibraltar Dockyard Extension.—The three Docks are completed and in use, and the Dockyard Extension works will be completed during 1907. The water storage tanks on the east side of the Rock are also nearly finished, and the residences for officers and artisans are well advanced.

Hong Kong Dockyard Extension.—The tidal basin and wharf walls, the deepening of basin areas, approaches to wharf walls, etc., the buildings for the engineering and constructive Departments, the graving dock, etc., are nearing completion. The works contingent upon the dock, comprising pump wells, culverts and penstock shafts, caisson, engine and boiler house, western sea wall, etc., are well advanced. Incidental services, including reclamation, drainage, latrines, water and fire services, railways and crane roads, etc., are being proceeded with.

Colombo Dock.—This dock, carried out under the Colonial Government and partly paid for by the Admiralty, is completed with the exception of certain incidental services which are under consideration, and of the North Guide Pier which is being proceeded with. The dock is now capable of being used by H.M. ships.

Malta Dockyard Extension.—The contract work for the two new docks is completed with the exception of a few minor incidental services. The new shops, stores, factory, etc., included in the reduced scheme for the Dockyard extension are being proceeded with, some of the buildings are practically completed.

Bermuda Dockyard Extension.—This work, including the contract for new breakwater, wharf walls, etc., is now completed.

Simon's Bay Dockyard Extension.—The dock, East breakwater, East and West piers, and necessary dredging are all well advanced.

Coaling Facilities and Fuel Storage.

Plymouth.—A scheme for the establishment of a coaling depot on a reduced scale (comprising re-construction of wharf, extension of quay, railways, water supply, etc.). has been drawn up and the work started. Provision is made in Vote 10, 1907–8, for completing it.

Portland.—The contract work of extending the coaling jetty has been completed. In connection with the storage of oil fuel a concrete jetty and two additional tanks have been completed. Provision has been made in Vote 10, 1907–8, for further tanks for oil fuel storage.

Malta.—The coaling scheme has been completed.

Hong Kong.—The coaling jetty at Kowloon has been finished. The coal sheds are being proceeded with.

Schemes for the storage of oil fuel at other stations have been under consideration, and provision is made in Vote 10, 1907–8, for starting work.

Chatham Dockyard Extension.—The contract work for the new river wall at the Upnor Entrance is practically completed.

Sheerness Depot for Torpedo-Boat Destroyers.—The following are the main works comprised in the scheme: Extension of Nos. 4 and 5 docks, caisson at No. 2 Dock, electric shop, mast shed, torpedo tube store, etc., dock pumping station, new engine and boiler house at Navy well, and zincing shops. The whole of these works are now practically completed.

Naval Establishment at Rosyth.—(Preliminary Works.)—Arrangements have been made to obtain a permanent supply of water; the scheme (including new reservoir and mains) is being carried out by the Dumfermline District Committee, and is well advanced. A railway line to connect the proposed Naval establishment with the North British Railway has been practically completed by the Railway Company. Railway connections with the Company's system inside the Admiralty boundary have been provided. Borings have been made and an experimental cylinder is being sunk in order to obtain information necessary for determining the method of construction to be adopted for the wharf walls, etc. An item for the Naval Depot, Rosyth, has been introduced into Vote 10, 1907–8, and money provided for the production of plans based on the investigations already carried out.

NAVAL BARRACKS, ETC.

Gunnery Schools.

Chatham.—A scheme has been approved comprising gun drill and stripping shed shooting-instruction shed, lecture room and offices, loading-teacher shed, armourer's workshops, etc. The work has been commenced.

Devonport.—The approved scheme includes gun drill and stripping shed, shooting-instruction shed, loading-teacher shed, additional men's block, barrack courses shed, lecture rooms and offices, armourers' workshop, etc. All these works are in hand and some of them are approaching completion.

Portsmouth.—The extension of the gun drill battery is practically finished.

Keyham Naval Barracks.—Contracts have been let for new gymnasium and cart shed, stables, etc., and Squash Racquet Courts, and the works are practically completed.

Magazines.

Chatham.—Two new magazines at Chattenden and certain improvements at Upnor and Lodge Hill have been completed. A new laboratory at Chattenden is practically finished and a shell-filling laboratory at Upnor is in hand. Two additional magazines at Chattenden, and works connected with the disposal of sewage at Upnor and Chattenden, are about to be started.

Portsmouth.—Two additional cordite magazines at Priddy's Hard are in hand and approaching completion.

Plymouth.—Additional shell stores are being proceeded with at Bull Point.

Malta.—The additional magazine accommodation is approaching completion.

Coast Guard Ranges and Royal Naval Reserve Batteries.—The Coast Guard works already approved are approaching completion.

Torpedo Ranges.—The extension of the torpedo range at Horsea Island has been completed. Arrangements are being made for the provision of an additional range elsewhere.

Electric Light and Power in Naval Establishments.—Contracts have been let for generating stations, machinery, and other works involved in the installations of electric light and power at the Cape of Good Hope, Chatham, Gibraltar, Malta, Plymouth, Portland, Portsmouth and Sheerness. The station at the Cape of Good Hope has been completed, and the work at the other establishments is well advanced.

T.

23rd February, 1907.

APPENDIX III.

PUBLIC BILLS

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Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the House of Lords.

(A.) HOUSE OF LORDS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Australian States Consolidation [H.L.]	*Earl of Elgin*	Committee } 28th Feb. (174) Report } Read 3^a passed 5th March (602)
*Companies [H.L.]	*Earl of Granard*	Read 1^a 7th March (927)
Companies Act (Debenture and Debenture Stock) [H.L.]	*Lord Avebury*	Read 2^a 5th March (600)
*County Courts [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 28th Feb. (173)
*Judicature [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Second Reading 4th Mar. (436) " " 7th " (927)
*Matrimonial Causes Acts Amendment [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 11th March (1167)
Municipal Representation [H.L.]	*Lord Courtney*	Read 1^a 27th Feb. (4)
Prize Courts [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 11th March (1168)
Rule Committee [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 11th March (1167)

(B.) HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress
Advertisement Regulations	*Mr. Hart-Davies*	Read 1^o 28th Feb. (269)
Character Note	*Mr. Bell*	Read 1^o 4th March (498)
Clerks of the Peace and County Council	*Mr. Luttrell*	Read 1^o 27th Feb. (68)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Education Acts Amendment	*Mr. Walter Rea*	Read 2° 1st March (431)
*Education Administrative Provision	*Mr. McKenna*	Read 1° 28th Feb. (269)
Education (Provision of Meals) Scotland	*Mr. J. R. Macdonald*	Read 2° 1st March (368)
Feus and Building Leases (Scotland)	*Mr. Findlay*	Read 1° 5th March (653)
Hours of Labour (Bakehouses	*Mr. Wilkie*	Read 1° 5th March (652)
Housing of the Working Classes Acts Amendment	*Sir Walter Foster*	Read 1° 1st March (432)
*Judicature (Ireland)	*Mr. Birrell*	Read 1° 5th March (653)
Justices of the Peace	*Mr. Luttrell*	Read 1° 27th Feb. (68)
Licensing (Scotland) Amendment	*Mr. Findlay*	Read 1° 27th Feb. (68)
Limited Partnerships	*Sir William Holland*	Read 1° 4th March (500)
Local Authorities Officers	*Mr. Luke White*	Read 1° 4th March (498)
Outdoor Relief Pensioners	*Mr. J. R. Macdonald*	Read 1° 6th March (821)
Police Superannuation	*Mr. S. Roberts*	Read 1° 28th Feb. (269)
Political Pensions	*Sir H. Vincent*	Read 2° 8th March (1163)
Prevention of Cruelty to Children	*Mr. Bramsdon*	Read 1° 5th March (653)
*Probation of Offenders	*Mr. Gladstone*	Read 1° 27th Feb. (68)
Public Health Officers	*Sir Walter Foster*	Read 1° 1st March (432)
Public Libraries	*Mr. Tennant*	Read 1° 4th March (499)
Purchase of Land (England and Wales)	*Mr. J. Collings*	Read 1° 6th March (822)
Railway Tickets	*Mr. Morton*	Read 1° 4th March (499)
Released Persons (Poor Law Relief)	*Mr. H. Samuel*	Read 1° 7th March (1004)
School Board Conference (Scotland)	*Mr. E. Wason*	Read 1° 6th March (821)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Shops (No. 2)	*Sir C. Dilke*	Bill withdrawn 12th March (1451)
Small Holding (Scotland) (No. 2)	*Mr. Munro Ferguson*	Read 1° 28th Feb. (269)
Spurious Sports	*Mr. Luttrell*	Read 1° 27th Feb. (68)
*Territorial and Reserve Forces	*Mr. Haldane*	Read 1° 4th March (503)
Valuation (Ireland)	*Mr. James O'Connor*	Read 1° 11th March (1274)
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APPENDIX IV.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SESSION 1907.

LIST OF RULES, ORDERS, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

In Continuation of List given in previous Volume.

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Council of the City of Cardiff, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Riverside and Canton Wards of the City [4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	28 February	40 days
Army,—Copy of Draft Order in Council declaring what is requisite to entitle a Volunteer or Volunteer Engineer Corps, Volunteer Divisions of Submarine Miners, and Volunteer Electrical Engineers to be deemed an efficient Volunteer [26 and 27 Vic., c. 65, s. 11]	2 March	One lunar month
Education (Scotland) (Code 1907),—Copy of Code of Regulations for Day Schools, with Appendices, by the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in Scotland [35 and 36 Vic., c. 62, s. 67]	11 March	One month
Education (Scotland),—Copy of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 9th March 1907, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant [35 and 36 Vic., c. 62, s. 67]	11 March	One month
Education (Scotland),—Copy of Regulations for the preliminary education, training, and certification of teachers for various grades of schools [35 and 36 Vic., c. 62, s. 67]	12 March	One month
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Newport (Isle of Wight), and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Borough [4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	12 March	40 days

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[AUTHORISED EDITION].

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